The Book Galatians - LAW or GRACE?

Jan Beute -https://www.vlichthus.nl

The Book of Galatians (also known as the Epistle to the Galatians), written by the Apostle Paul, is a passionate defense of the gospel of grace against legalism. Its relatively short length and features intense repetition of key theological terms to hammer home Paul's arguments.
The are many frequently occurring words

- **Christ**: Appears around 38 times, often in phrases like "in Christ" or "Christ Jesus," emphasizing union with Christ as the basis for salvation and freedom.
- **Faith** (and forms like "believe"): Around 19–20 occurrences, central to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone, not works (e.g., Galatians 2:16; 3:11).
- **Spirit** (Holy Spirit): About 18 times, highlighting life led by the Spirit versus the flesh, and the Spirit as the mark of true believers (e.g., chapters 5–6 on the fruit of the Spirit).
- **Jesus** (often with Christ): Around 17 times, underscoring Jesus' role in redemption.
- **Law**: Repeated extensively (over 30 times in some counts), contrasted with grace; Paul argues the law reveals sin but cannot justify—it acts as a guardian until faith in Christ comes.
- **God** (and "Lord"): Frequently used, often in contexts of God's promise, grace, and fatherhood.
- **Gospel**: Emphasized as the true message of salvation by grace, perverted by false teachers requiring circumcision.
- **Grace**: Key to Paul's greeting and warnings against falling from grace through legalism.
- **Freedom/Liberty**: Tied to liberation from the law's bondage, with calls to stand firm in freedom.
- **Flesh** (contrasted with Spirit): In discussions of human effort

These repetitions drive home Galatians' core themes: justification by faith apart from works of the law, Christian freedom from legalism, life in the Spirit, and unity in Christ (transcending Jew/Gentile divisions, as in 3:28). Paul warns against Judaizers who insisted on Mosaic Law observance for salvation, urging believers to live by faith and love

Galatians 1:1-3
Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,
The opening verses of Galatians are Paul's serious words to believers. He insists the gospel he preached is the only true, God-given message, and that's the heart of the whole letter, echoed in other New Testament epistles.
The core idea: Believers in Christ are raised to new life with Him, fully justified by God. We already have eternal life, no waiting. We're part of a new world, set apart from sin and decay. Paul urges us who trust Jesus to embrace this truth and live it out. Simply put: Don't live by the world's basic rules (like the law), but under grace's rule, it's totally different. Grace and law clash like oil and water; they don't mix.
After his greeting, Paul dives in. In verse 6, he's shocked: How could the Galatians so quickly turn from Christ, who called them by grace, to a false gospel? They haven't abandoned faith entirely, but they've adopted a lifestyle that contradicts it, total inconsistency. Paul tackles this theme throughout, from different angles.
Remarkably, verse 4 sums up the epistle: Christ ‘gave himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father.’ Believers are pulled out of this corrupt age. Sure, we still live in the old creation physically (body and flesh), but God views us as already in heaven with Christ, not as old-world citizens, but as the ‘firstfruits’ of a brand-new creation. We're co-heirs with Christ, with all the rights and responsibilities that brings.
The Galatians loved ‘obligations’, piling on duties and rules that choked their growth. Paul rebukes them for it, aiming to free them from human-made burdens. Yes, believers have moral duties to God, but they mean living by New Creation principles, not the old worlds. That's how God draws us out of this evil age.
Galatians boils down to ‘law or grace’, or ‘slavery vs. freedom.’ Chained to the law, or free in Christ?
In verse 3's greeting, ’Grace be to you and peace from God’, Paul hints: Remember, you're under the New Covenant, not the old. God gives grace, which brings peace. Live from that, as verse 4 says.

Galatians 1:4, 5
Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world (Greek ‘aion’ = ‘age’), according to the will of God and our Father; To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

It's obvious this message couldn't come from humans. The world encourages us to reach our full potential, but the Lord calls us to abandon our old, crucified self. Christ gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil world (or ‘age’), exactly as God the Father willed. That's the core theme of the whole epistle.
We're not just talking about Jesus bearing sins on the cross. Chapters 3–5 focus on how Christ (or God) pulls us out of this world entirely. We still live in sinful bodies and flesh, but we're no longer linked to this evil age.
So, where does He take us? To the ‘age to come,’ as Scripture teaches elsewhere (e.g., Mark 10:30). There's a sharp divide between this present evil age and the one ahead.2 » » Corinthians 4:4 :
‘In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.’
Being ‘delivered’ means breaking free from Satan's grip. ‘Age’ here describes the era's evil character, not just a timeline, but how things operate under Satan's rule as ‘god of this world’ (Ephesians 2:2). That rule will end. Those living in this evil age can be redeemed to inherit the age to come.
Biblically, the age to come kicked off with Christ's resurrection, the start of the end for the old age. Today, both overlap. The evil age fully wraps up at Judgment Day (or Christ's return, depending on the angle).
When we genuinely believe in Jesus, heart and soul, we're born again. We die to the old world and step into new life: regeneration. It's like crossing from the evil age into the coming one. From God's view, we lose all claim to the old world and gain citizenship in a new creation, the kingdom of Christ. We belong there now.
This epistle challenges Galatian believers (already positioned in the age to come): How real is Christ's power in your life? Do you still act like you're in the evil age, or the new one? Who (or what) do you serve? Where do your thoughts go? What matters most?
Christ died for believers' sins, the church's sins, not the world's, to practically yank us out of this age. We shouldn't follow its rules, philosophies, or empty deceptions (Colossians 2:8). Don't stress over tomorrow, food, clothes, or hoarding treasures (Matthew 6:25–34). Instead:
» Colossians 3:1–3 :
‘If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
‘Believers must learn these ‘age to come’ principles and live by them, to the Father's glory (Romans 6:4).

Galatians 1:6
I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ‘That ye are so soon removed from him’ is ‘running hard away from him’, ‘who called you into the grace of Christ’.

Regarding that ‘another gospel,’ all sorts of messages get preached as ‘the gospel.’ But what's the true one? How do you spot it? Simple: It's the preaching of God's grace. The Galatians drifted from the grace they were called into and latched onto a false gospel. But in reality, there's no other gospel meaning ‘glad tidings,’ and only grace delivers the real good news. We live and breathe in the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1). Whatever happens, we always have reason to rejoice, from the certainty of Christ's atoning work in the past and our secure future. That's why it says: ‘Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice’ (Philippians 4:4).
Some people, called into Christ's grace and saved by it, still veer away from it, even suppressing it. They're rescued for heaven but refuse to live from grace day by day. Yet that's exactly what grace requires.
What baffles me: Believers saved by grace who turn around and impose the law on fellow Christians. That's flat-out contradictory and unscriptural. We need to hold fast to the clear, pure message of grace.

Galatians 1:7
Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. There is but one Gospel; there is no other. The ‘gospel of the grace of God’ (Acts 20:24) is the only message that truly redeems us. It brings joy, hope, and strength. God's Word is ‘the power of God unto salvation’ (Romans 1:16). Other teachings might seem wise, but they're not the real gospel. Paul calls them out in Colossians 2:23: ‘Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.’
There's no other gospel, but some people ‘trouble’ believers, meaning they unsettle or throw them off balance. You lose your solid footing. These folks were standing firm in grace, the gospel, freedom, and faith, then suddenly, they're somewhere else. Watch out: Step away from grace, and you always slide back to the law, self-effort, and the Old Covenant. It pushes human philosophies, empty deceptions, and man-made traditions (Colossians 2:8). You end up trapped in the ‘weak and beggarly elements’ (Galatians 4:9), the old-world order.
The goal? Stay planted right where you are: in grace and freedom (Galatians 5:1). But the issue is, troublemakers keep trying to shake believers, often by pulling them into exclusive groups. That's how they unsettle people. They twist and warp Christ's gospel to corrupt the pure message. In the end, they block the gospel's free flow. That's when Paul drops a sharp, no-nonsense line.

Galatians 1:8, 9
But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.
Paul repeats himself in verse 9 to drive home how crucial this is. It also proves he never preached a different gospel later, as some falsely claim, or he'd be cursing himself right here.

Even an angel from heaven preaching another gospel is accursed. Satan, still ‘the prince of the power of the air’ (Ephesians 2:2), disguises himself ‘as an angel of light’ (2 Corinthians 11:14). The context here points to heavenly deceptions.
Today, people claim an angel appeared with a direct message from Jesus, but it clashes with what the Bible teaches. They side with the angel over Scripture. The real odds of it being a true angel? Slim to none. More likely, its imagination, fantasy, or flat-out lies. But if it was a genuine angel, it wasn't from Christ, it was one of Satan's, and those are real.

Galatians 1:10
For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.
Paul's message isn't ‘according to man.’ In my view, preaching the gospel isn't about pleasing people or chasing worldly approval. You don't speculate on whether folks liked it, there's only one true message. No need to wonder: ‘Should I tweak it? Say something different?’ Absolutely nothing else exists!
When Jesus came to the world, ‘the world knew him not.’ His own people ‘received him not’ (John 1:10-11). Today, grace gets rejected too, and that's good company. By nature, the gospel doesn't appeal to people; it's not what they crave. Humans want self-help to boost and elevate themselves. But the Bible offers the opposite: We're pulled out of ‘this present evil world,’ from ‘darkness... into [God's] marvellous light’ (Colossians 1:13). From death to life. Placed in heaven, that's our real home now. (Galatians touches this lightly, but Philippians, Colossians, and Hebrews dive in.)
It's no crowd-pleaser; it clashes with human nature.
Believers must first grasp: Before God, our old self has no right to exist. We've died to it. ‘One died for all, therefore all died’ (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). Galatians drives it home sharply in 6:14.
Galatians 1:10 stresses: Gospel preaching serves Christ first, not people. A common pitfall (one we might fall into): Assuming the gospel fits man's desires or preaching it mainly from love for sinners. Loving people isn't wrong, but it can't be the main driver, or we'll water it down to make it ‘attractive’ and easier to swallow.
Paul spells this out in 2 Corinthians: Don't corrupt, dilute, or sugarcoat God's Word. Preach the full truth, that the old creation, old self, and old world don't count before God. He's already dealt with them at the cross. Simply: The old man can't be patched up. It's scrapped, forgotten, legally gone. The world hangs in shreds, judged on the cross. Clinging to that old self? It shows little eternal life inside.
» 1 Thessalonians 2:4-6 :
‘But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.’

One should preach the Gospel with the awareness of God’s presence and Christ Himself. With that we please God. He tests us whether we really do this, it says here.

Galatians 1:11, 12
But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.
For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The Gospel is a message given to man, but not specifically directed at that old, natural, sinful man. It also does not come from man. The apostle Paul could say that as one of the few. He does not say, the Lord Jesus Christ told me this or made it known to me, but: I received these things ‘by the revelation of Jesus Christ’. I do not mean that the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus. The ‘revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Revelation 1:1) as such will only fully take place in his second coming, but exceptionally He revealed Himself to the apostle Paul. In such a way that he was more or less informed about God’s working in the Church today, in which Christ is hidden, in which his Kingdom is hidden. In short, His work in our days in the Church, a gathering of believers, is brought together in Christ. That is the theme the Apostle speaks about. He does not share the truth immediately in verse 12, but a few verses later, he does. The thought of verse 12 is that by any means he did not receive that Gospel from a man and also did not learn it from a man, and he explains that in verse 13.

Galatians 1:13
For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:
In other words: through what he had received from a young age, he proved not a worthy member of the Church, let alone a forerunner or an apostle. On the contrary, he became a persecutor of the Church, and in an exceptional way. He says it himself: ‘that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God’. What he already brings forward with this is that Judaism leads to enmity against Christ. But what is the hallmark of Judaism? Life under the law. By living under it, one does not come to the Lord Jesus Christ. It even leads to persecution of the Christians. Although we are regularly confronted with the fact that persecution of Jews comes from Christians, biblical history shows that persecution of Christians is prompted by the Jews. I am just stating the fact, and the Apostle does too.

Galatians 1:14
And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.
Religion made him persecute the Church, which is the Body of Christ. Through his upbringing, his training, he was at any rate overzealous and became one of the great men within Judaism. At a relatively young age he had already advanced so far that, with mandates from the high priest, from the Old Covenant mind you, he persecuted Jews who had come to

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, he stood exactly on the wrong side, and he himself established that. As well as this:

Galatians 1:15, 16
But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:
The first two verses describe Paul's dramatic encounter on the road to Damascus (Acts 9 and 22), but the real focus is what came next. Paul needed guidance afterward, and he didn't get it from any human: ‘He conferred not with flesh and blood’ (verse 16). His message wasn't man-made; it came directly ‘by the revelation of Jesus Christ.’
In verse 15, Paul says God ‘separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace.’ That's striking, Scripture rarely shows God choosing someone right from birth. So why did God let Paul pursue Judaism for so long? Why not put him in a family eagerly awaiting the Messiah, or even one that already believed in Jesus? Nope. He got a hardcore Jewish upbringing that didn't draw him to Christ, it turned him into a brutal persecutor of the church.
Why the delay? It's a deliberate lesson for us: to show where the law leads and what life under it produces. If anyone could authoritatively warn against living by the law, it's Paul. He knows the traps inside out, no one else has his credentials. That hands-on experience was his alone, not the other apostles'. As an active enemy of Christ and Christianity, he saw firsthand how the law breeds unbelief and hatred toward God. That's why he later confronts Peter for flirting with law-keeping again (Galatians 2:11 onward). Paul calls him out because he knows the dead end it creates.
On top of that, Paul understood it ‘pleased God’ to set him apart and call him by grace alone, not through Judaism. Blinded on that Damascus road (physically and spiritually), he was totally disoriented, clueless about his position. So Paul's goal became clear: Receive truth straight from Jesus' revelation. God planned to reveal His Son in him. Then, per verse 16, Paul was to preach that Son, Christ and the gospel, to the Gentiles.
But Paul didn't know Christ; he'd been persecuting Him. For Paul to proclaim Him to others, Christ had to reveal Himself first. Judaism couldn't help, Saul was notorious as a church hunter, and no one there had that in mind. Jerusalem's believers knew his rep and distrusted him; they couldn't guide him either. ‘Flesh and blood’ was no use. Only the Lord could reveal Himself personally, and that's what Paul went after.

Galatians 1:17
Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. He did not retreat to Jerusalem, where he came from, with the papers from the high priest.
Paul didn't rush back to Jerusalem to consult the apostles there, though he did think about it. Instead, he headed to Arabia for ‘counsel’, a legal term meaning a judge's verdict or ruling. He wanted clarity on how everything fit together, what was right, and what wasn't. But no human (‘flesh and

blood’) could deliver that. Seeking law and justice meant turning to the Lawgiver Himself: God, through the Spirit. The text implies Paul went straight to God, and the Spirit, for guidance.
Why Arabia? That's where God gave the law at Mount Sinai (as Galatians 4:25 notes, making it the only other New Testament mention of Arabia). Paul sought the Lord at the very place Israel received the law. Moses was called there (called Horeb too) and stayed 40 days. Elijah later spent 40 days there too, where God appeared to him (1 Kings 19:8-18). I suspect Jesus went to a similar wilderness mountain for the same reason (Matthew 4), 40 days and nights to meet His Father before facing temptation. The adversary always shows up after such encounters.
Saul (Paul) became the fourth in this lineup before starting his ministry. Under the Old Covenant, Moses and Elijah got glimpses of the coming New Covenant on Sinai. Jesus, as its Mediator, had to grasp it fully. Paul, tasked with preaching it widely, learned it in a unique way there, gaining insights that underpin his epistles. He uncovered core truths about the church, hidden in the Old Testament: events and salvation from Christ's first coming to His return in glory. These were in the Old Testament all along but veiled, you need someone to point them out and open your eyes. Paul's eyes were opened on Sinai; he ‘saw’ the New Covenant and made it his message.
Afterward, history shows he returned to Damascus ‘after many days’ (Acts 9:23). Then he went to Syria and Cilicia, eventually back home to Tarsus, to rework his old views from scratch. Later, Barnabas (Acts 4:36) fetched him from there. But in Damascus, Paul stirred up trouble and had to flee, which Galatians 1 picks up next.

Galatians 1:18-20
Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.
The Bible is full of pairs, and here's another: After 14 days (two weeks). After two years (in the third year), Paul goes to Jerusalem. After two weeks (in the third week), he leaves again. For those who spot biblical patterns (typology), this hints at our current era, the time between Christ's first and second coming, symbolized by ‘2,000’ years.
Paul stayed at Peter's house and says: ‘I saw none of the other apostles, save James’ (Galatians 1:19), but James wasn't one of the Twelve; he was ‘the Lord's brother.’ This James was Jesus' half-brother: Mary's second son, Joseph's first legitimate child. Jesus appeared to him after the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:7), and he wrote the Epistle of James. By bloodline, James was the rightful heir to David's earthly throne. If Israel had restored David's kingdom back then, James would've been king. That explains why this late convert (only after Jesus' resurrection) quickly became the top leader in the Jerusalem church, which was like the kickoff of Christ's kingdom on earth, with James as stand-in ruler while Jesus was away.

What Paul writes lines up perfectly with Acts (written by Luke, not Paul). There, it says Paul couldn't approach the apostles directly but Barnabas introduced him.

Galatians 1:21

‘Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia.’ That's north: Syria (Damascus as ancient capital) around the corner to Cilicia in the west, Paul's home turf, including Tarsus.

» Acts 9:27-30 spells it out:

Barnabas grabbed Paul, brought him to the apostles, and explained how Paul had seen the Lord on the road, how Jesus spoke to him, and how he'd preached boldly in Jesus' name at Damascus. Paul hung out with them in Jerusalem, coming and going freely. Fresh from his Damascus-road conversion, Paul (then Saul) fearlessly declared Jesus as Messiah. He debated Greek-speaking Jews (Hellenists), but they plotted to kill him over his message (Acts 9:29).

To keep him safe, believers hustled him to Caesarea, then shipped him off to his hometown Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 9:30). Paul hunkered down there for years. Eventually, Barnabas tracked him down in Tarsus and recruited him to Antioch in Syria.

Galatians 1:22-24

And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judaea which were in Christ: But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me.

Paul was unknown to the believers in Judea, including those in Jerusalem. They'd never seen Saul in the church, they only knew him as their old persecutor. But word spread: The man who once destroyed the faith now preaches it. Because of that, ‘they glorified God in me’ (Galatians 1:24, KJV). It glorified God that Paul had come to faith and proclaimed the very message he'd once attacked and persecuted.

Why does Paul recount all this in Galatians 1? To prove his gospel comes directly from God, not from any human. And to show his ministry is fully independent: no influence from any man, apostle, church, or human theology. That's how it should always be.

Galatians 2:1

Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. After 14 years lapsed, Paul is later picked up from home by Joseph Barnabas.

That time in Antioch marked the beginning of Paul's more prominent ministry alongside Barnabas, leading to their commissioning for the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-3).

Firstly they visited Cyprus, for Barnabas came from there. Afterwards the Apostle went on a missionary journey again, but then by himself. On the way he picks up Timothy and Titus. So not 15 or 14 days ensues, but 14 years. That is a similar ‘picture’ and again we encounter 2 x 7 a double or 2. Note twice the ‘after’. After the Lord had gone His way with the apostle

Paul for 14 years, apart from men and completely outside Jerusalem, he went ‘up again to Jerusalem’. The Barnabas from 14 years earlier was there and also Titus, the Greek.

Galatians 2:2
And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain.
‘And I went up by revelation’ means that the Lord told him, in one way or another, that he had to do it. If Paul says ‘by revelation’ it means that he would not have gone to Jerusalem otherwise. After all, he had persecuted the Church there earlier and was actually nowhere welcome. Not with the Hebrew-Jewish congregations, not with the Greek-Jewish congregations and certainly not with the Christian congregations in Jerusalem. We also find this history in Acts 15, which forms the background to Galatians 2. It concerned the circumcision. The Apostle went to Jerusalem and reported on his ministry to what I will call the elders, the leading brothers, the apostles then. That is also discussed in Acts 15:4. In verse 5 it says that some from the sect of the Pharisees, who had become believers but remained Pharisees (that was not the intention of course), say that one must circumcise them and in addition command to keep the law of Moses. The apostles and the elders gathered together to give attention to this matter leading to many disputes and debates.

Galatians 2:3-5
But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.
There were those who believed that circumcision was necessary, but it was not imposed upon Titus. Those ‘false brethren’ were some from the sect of the Pharisees. They were false brothers because, as believers, they still lived under the Jewish law and according to the very strict understanding of the Pharisees. But Paul and Barnabas did not in any way or at any moment submit themselves to these false brethren and thus not to the teaching that says a believer must be circumcised. Paul says: ‘We did not yield in submission even for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you’. The ‘truth of the gospel’ is that man is justified by faith alone and not by circumcision. God counts faith as righteousness, and that is the gospel.

Galatians 2:6
But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:
Here Paul confirms the thought that he indeed had received nothing in any way from these disciples or apostles in Jerusalem. He even went completely around it. He does not deny that those disciples or apostles in

Jerusalem were rightly ‘regarded as something.’ He does not deny that they had been something in former times, because they had walked with the Lord Jesus during His ministry, but who or what they are, Paul says, makes no difference, for God does not accept ‘the person,’ namely ‘the outward appearance.’ The apostle also does not accept the outward appearance of people, for it is about doctrinal biblical truths, and that has nothing to do in itself with who those people are who agree or disagree with it. ‘Those who were regarded as something,’ as Peter, James, and all the other apostles ultimately agreed with the ministry and the preaching of the apostle Paul and thus also with the content of his preaching. We find that here in Galatians 2 and also in Acts 15.

Galatians 2:7
But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter;
They came to a division of the area in which they would bring the gospel. Paul was particularly sent to bring the gospel to the ‘uncircumcision,’ namely to the Gentiles. Peter had in particular a ministry for the Jews. It is not about a difference here, but about an agreement, for they both preached the same message indeed, and that also appears from verse 8, for it is stated factually there as well.

Galatians 2:8
(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:) That same God, that same Spirit of God, worked in both.
Peter and Paul had distinct but overlapping ministries. In Acts 15, Peter says he was sent to the Gentiles, at least to Cornelius and his household, based on a direct revelation from the Lord (Acts 11). His main work was preaching to Jews, but he reached Gentiles too.
Paul, on the other hand, focused primarily on Gentiles. Yet Acts shows he always went to Jews first: Wherever he travelled, he'd start in the Jewish community to preach the gospel. Often, Jews rejected it, while Gentiles embraced it in droves. The message was aimed at Jews originally, but Gentiles gained the most from it. Paul's ministry wasn't mainly to Jews, but to Gentiles, though he approached Jews first, which then opened doors for Gentiles.
In Romans 11, he calls himself ‘the apostle of the Gentiles’ (and ‘apostle of the uncircumcision’ in Galatians 2).
» Romans 11:13, 14 :
‘For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office: If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.’
Paul openly says he's the apostle to Gentiles, but the pinnacle of his calling is winning over his fellow Jews, his ‘brothers according to the flesh’, for Christ, even if just some.
The Jew-Gentile divide isn't rigid. Generally: Paul preached to Gentiles, and through that, Jews came to faith. Peter preached to Jews, and through

that, Gentiles came to faith. That's the rough breakdown, and beyond that, it doesn't really matter.

Galatians 2:9, 10
And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.
Some claim Paul and Peter preached two different gospels, based on Galatians 2:7: Paul was entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision (Gentiles), Peter with the gospel of the circumcision (Jews). Their logic: Different names mean different messages. But that's wrong, for two main reasons.

- First, Galatians 1:8 : 'But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.'

And Galatians 1:9 : 'As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.'
No one, including Peter, could preach a different gospel without being accursed!

- Second, verse 7's main thought continues into verse 9: Galatians 2:9 : 'When they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.'

James, Peter, and John (and possibly others) offered this 'right hand of fellowship', a sign of unity and shared purpose. Shaking right hands symbolizes being connected as one. That's why some refuse to do it if they don't feel united.

Galatians 2:11-14
But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, if thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?
From Galatians 2:11 onward, there's clear proof that Paul and Peter preached the same gospel. Paul was ministering in Antioch when Peter suddenly started acting like he was under the law, forgetting his experience with Cornelius (Acts 10–11). Sadly, many believers today slip back into living under the law (or some form of it). Paul publicly calls Peter out with sharp words, loud enough for everyone to hear. If they'd preached different gospels and had separate ministries, Paul wouldn't

have the right to rebuke him; Peter could've just said, ‘Mind your own business, that's my calling.’
Instead, Peter himself endorses Paul's teachings in 2 Peter 3:15-16 :
‘And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.’
There's a difference in their emphases, but not a contradiction. Paul especially stresses that we believers today share a heavenly calling, with heavenly citizenship and walk right now, and a heavenly future. The other apostles (like Peter) focus on believers' future in Christ's kingdom but don't specify where it is. Without more detail, you'd assume it's on earth (matching Old Testament and Jewish hopes). Peter, James, and John never say believers' future is earthly, it's just not stated.
So Paul goes to the Gentiles, Peter to the Jews. Paul preaches that Christ isn't just the One through whom we live, He lives in us (Galatians 2:20). We don't live under anyone or anything else.

Galatians 2:20
I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.
‘I am crucified with Christ’ means the same as ‘one died for all’ (2 Corinthians 5:15, KJV), and that applies even to unbelievers (see verse 10). As believers not living under the law, we're no longer sinners; we're Christians, outside the law entirely. The law belongs to the Jews, and biblically, they're defined as unbelievers. (I know that's blunt, but it's the truth.) When a Jew believes, he's no longer a Jew in the biblical sense, he's a Christian, added to the saved church, the body of Christ. He leaves Judaism and Jewish identity behind. It's like us British folks: Once we become God's children, our birth country means nothing, we get new citizenship, a new passport, a new homeland, future, and duties.
‘And I live’ means regeneration: Dying to the old self, then rising its death and resurrection. As God's children, we're meant to be led by His Spirit, living by it. We should yield to the Spirit's work, Christ's work in us. Clearly, we're not to put ourselves under the law, those are incompatible. Christ ended the law; choosing it rejects Him in practice and blocks the Spirit's work in us.
‘But Christ liveth in me’ means our aliveness before God isn't from the old man or who we are, it's Christ's own life in us. God ignores our old nature completely; that old man is dead to Him. (Not to us, our neighbours, or sadly even our fellow believers, but to God, yes.)
Paul adds: ‘The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God’ (Galatians 2:20, KJV). God places His Spirit, Christ's life, into our mortal, sinful bodies. Through that Spirit, our ‘mortal bodies’ are alive before God right now (Romans 8:11, KJV). This isn't just at the rapture; it's already true. Nothing's changed in our bodies (they can still die), but

Christ's Spirit dwells in them. We're alive to God despite our flesh. It all flows from Jesus Christ's faithfulness, His faith in God's Word as the Son of God.
What lingers is Christ's life in us, and that's not under the law. Can we force Christ under the law based on our ideas or traditions?
‘Who loved me, and gave himself for me’ (Galatians 2:20, KJV) points to His post-resurrection life, not His earthly suffering and death. He ‘gave himself for me’ by living and working in me, to build up the church and each believer especially. The Son gave Himself to us; we must not ruin that gift.

Galatians 2:21
I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.
Paul says in effect: whoever wants to do it, let them know, but I refuse to frustrate the grace of God. He holds fast to ‘the riches of His grace, wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence.’ (Ephesians 1) If a man could be justified before God by the law, His death would have been in vain. ‘God forbid!’ And thus:
Hebrews 4:16 and 10:19
16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. 19 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

Galatians 3:1
‘O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?’
Paul's Rebuke to the Galatians:
Thy are strong words from the Apostle Paul. If believers place themselves under the law in any form, he calls it being ‘bewitched.’ This isn't just a mild warning, it points to something deeper: the influence of demons, the work of ‘the prince of the power of the air’ (Ephesians 2:2), and ultimately, the schemes of Satan. To say this to fellow believers is harsh, but Paul doesn't soften it.
What Does ‘Foolish’ Really Mean?
The term ‘foolish’ (Greek: ἀνόητος, anóētos, G453) describes someone who has ‘lost their senses’ and is acting strangely. In biblical terms, this isn't about physical senses but the mind, our key tool for reasoning and discernment. To be foolish means we've lost the ability to perceive or think clearly. Paul argues that if you've been saved by grace, after the law's era has ended, and then you knowingly return to the law, you've lost your mind. The rest of Galatians lays out the logical case against this:

- The law is fulfilled in Christ.
- We're saved by faith in Jesus, not works.
- Why go back under a law that couldn't save anyone, that was a burdensome yoke, and that didn't even lead to Christ?
- In fact, the law often prevents people from coming to faith, as seen in the history of the Jewish people.

In Romans 1:14, Paul uses the same word for ‘foolish’ when describing ‘barbarians’, people without discernment or common sense. It means debasing ourselves, letting our minds be filled with foreign thoughts or ideas. And when that happens, we open the door to evil influences, like demonic inspiration or direct activity. Biblical ‘witchcraft’ always signals demonic work.

The Galatians' Dangerous Turn

The whole world is under this spell, but the Galatians are worse off. They've turned from light back to darkness, claiming to walk in truth while stumbling in lies. When a believer submits to the law in any way, they reject Christ and the ongoing work He does in us. That's the heart of Paul's cry: ‘O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth’

A quick note on the text: Some phrases like ‘that ye should not obey the truth’ or ‘among you’ aren't in the original Greek and don't change the core message. The verse actually reads: ‘O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified.’

Modern translations clarify it: ‘O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified’ (ESV). The point? Paul had vividly presented Jesus, not just as a historical fact, but as the crucified Savior. This wasn't mere information; it carried massive implications:

- Our sins were borne away on the cross (1 Peter 2:24).
- Christ ended the law once and for all: ‘For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth’ (Romans 10:4, KJV).

A Pattern in Paul's Ministry

Paul did the same with the Corinthians: He ‘painted’ Jesus Christ as crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2). But he held back deeper teachings because they ‘were not able to bear it [then] either, yea, ye are not able even now’ (1 Corinthians 3:2). Why? Without grasping the full impact of the cross first, the end of the law, salvation by faith alone, no one can truly understand or live out New Testament truth.

Galatians 3:2

This only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? The apostle continues his exposition in the questioning form. They must answer that themselves. The apostle does that in the Corinthian letter as well.

Galatians 3:3, 4

Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain!

The Galatians' suffering is a costly freedom. They endured real suffering, but why? It stems from their liberation from the law. Breaking free from legalism opened the door to persecution, and that's exactly what hit them.

The risk of reverting back If they now return to the law (or any form of it), all that suffering becomes pointless, ’in vain.’ It's like undoing the very freedom they fought for.
The temptation to compromise or want to dodge the heat of persecution? The easy out is to submit to some law, doesn't matter which one, as long as it's imposed on the flesh. Suddenly, the world turns tolerant. No more backlash. But at what price?

Galatians 3:5
He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
The Spirit's ongoing work is faith, not law.
Paul connects this to verses 2 and 3. The same Spirit who ‘ministers’ (verse 3) also ‘works miracles among you.’ So, his question in verse 5 is just like verse 2: Does this happen through works of the law... or through hearing with faith?

- Verse 2 focus: Receiving the Spirit (regeneration, being born again).
- Verse 5 focus: What comes next, the follow-up. Back then, spiritual gifts like miracles were common, happening regularly as evidence of that new life.

Paul repeats: Does God ‘doeth he it by the works of the law’? Or is it also ‘by the hearing of faith’? The clear answer is by hearing with faith.

Galatians 3:6
Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Paul's Link to Abraham: Faith over law
Paul pulls from the Old Testament, especially Abraham, to make his point. The Galatians got the Holy Spirit through hearing with faith, not works. Faith is the opposite of works, so he goes back to the source.
The Law's Timing and Abraham's Freedom

- The law came 430 years after Abraham (Galatians 3:17).
- It was given only to Israel in their land, and it's void today.
- But even in Genesis, God promised future redemption before the law. It had nothing to do with rules or works.
- Jews claimed to be Abraham's ‘seed,’ so they followed the law. Paul flips it: Abraham didn't live under the law. If you claim Abraham, drop the law. (Claim Moses if you want rules!)

Abraham ‘believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness’ (Genesis 15:6; also Romans 4:3; James 2:23). God made him right because of faith, not actions.
What ‘Justification’ really means - Justification isn't God making you perfect, it's like a judge declaring you ‘not guilty.’

- The accused is still a sinner, but God acquits them.
- Biblical example: Deuteronomy 25:1: judges ‘justify the righteous’ by declaring it, not changing them.
- God declares us righteous because Jesus bore our sins (past and future for Old Testament believers).
- Result: Our sins aren't held against us.

We're all born sinners, it's in our nature. We don't become sinners by sinning; we sin because we're already sinners (inherited urge). We can't fix it ourselves. It's tragic, but...God's Grace: Trust Him
God takes responsibility for His creation. He doesn't count our sins against us if we trust Him, that's faith. It's the simple step our sinful side can't block.

- Romans 4:5: ‘To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.’
- Psalm 32:1-2 (quoted in Romans 4:7-8): ‘Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven... unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.’ Sins exist, but God doesn't charge them to believers.

Bluntly: Believe, and God says you're righteous.

- 2 Corinthians 5:19,21: God reconciles the world in Christ, not imputing trespasses. Jesus became sin for us so we become God's righteousness in Him. We just share this ‘word of reconciliation.’

Flesh vs. Spirit: Why law fails - Paul echoes Romans 7: Spirit is willing, flesh is weak.

- Flesh (old nature) can't submit to God's law, it's doomed (‘body of the sins of the flesh,’ Colossians 2:11).
- Law feeds on flesh, so it never helps sinners. God ignores the flesh; He knows it's broken.
- We agree with God's law in our minds/spirits but can't obey in practice, we do what we hate, skip what we love. That's our inherited flaw.
- No one masters their flesh. God expects nothing from it.

Instead, God focuses on our heart and mind (spirit).

- Surrender your thinking to God's Word.
- Trust His promises, He'll fulfil them in you.
- That trust? God counts it as righteousness. Faith alone.

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Galatians 3:7
Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. Modern believers are Abraham's heirs. Why? God declared Abraham righteous because of faith (not works). That means everyone who believes shares in God's promises to Abraham.
All Believers Are ‘Counted Righteous’ Like Abraham

- Faith makes us part of those ancient promises.
- Galatians 3:7: ‘Those who are of faith are sons [heirs] of Abraham.’ (Note: It's ‘sons,’ not just ‘children’, emphasizing inheritance.)

What Abraham got by faith? We get the same, through our faith. We're his heirs in every way. Paul unpacks this in detail a few verses later (Galatians 3:29).

Galatians 3:8
And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’

Gentiles are also made right with God through faith. The Bible predicted this long ago and said God would do it. In fact, the good news (the gospel) was first shared with Abraham.
The word ‘gospel’ comes from Greek and means ‘good news’ or ‘glad tidings.’ It appears in the Old Testament as ‘good news.’ In essence, the gospel is the message of the New Covenant, which replaces the Old one. This is announced in the Old Testament, especially in Isaiah 40.
» Isaiah 40:8-10 :
‘The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever. O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him.’
The good news here is that the Lord will fight against the powerful, and his strong arm will rule. His ‘reward’ refers to the faithful church, starting from his resurrection.
The gospel didn't start in the New Testament, it began with Abraham, to whom it was first announced. Today, we live in the time when this salvation, gospel, and New Covenant are preached to all nations.
The Old Covenant was based on works, but the New Covenant is based on grace and faith. And so it says:

Galatians 3:9
So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. They are blessed together with, for that is what it means, the faithful Abraham. See likewise verse 11, with emphasis on faith. If one wishes to have part in what was promised to Abraham, that can only be if one also believes oneself, just as Abraham did. Therefore, Abraham is mentioned here, and in Romans 4, and in James 2, but also in the Gospels. It is especially directed to the Jews, because Abraham did not live under the law, but believed in what God had spoken.

Galatians 3:10
For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.
Paul warns in Galatians 5:3: ‘For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.’ This means if you choose circumcision (a key part of Jewish law), you must follow every single rule in the law.
» Deuteronomy 27:26 states:
‘Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.’ In other words, anyone who doesn't obey every part of the law is cursed, and everyone agrees to that.
But no one can perfectly obey everything in the law, so we're all under that curse. There's no exception for anyone.

» Romans 3:22-23 confirms: ‘...there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.’ Everyone sins and falls short of God's standard.
This isn't the ‘good news’, it's the hard truth. If you want to live by the law, you first have to face it: failing even one part brings God's curse. That's a clear divine verdict. So, no one can be made right with God by trying to follow the law.

Galatians 3:11, 12
But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Verse 11 says no one is made right with God by following the law, maybe it looks good to people, but not to God. This is clear because ‘The just shall live by faith,’ a quote from the Old Testament (Habakkuk 2:4). Faith and the law are opposites.
Verse 12 answers the common question: ‘But if someone believes, shouldn't they at least try to obey the law?’ Some Galatians might have thought that. Others say true believers will naturally follow the law out of thanks, or that the New Covenant writes the law on the heart, so it's the same thing.
But that's not true, it's nonsense. The law isn't based on faith. Living by the law means relying on your own efforts, not faith. Hebrews 11 doesn't say people lived ‘by the law’, it says ‘by faith’ over and over. Faith isn't from the law, and the law isn't from faith.
The verse says: ‘The man that doeth them shall live in them.’ But since no one can perfectly do everything in the law, no one can find life through it. The Old Testament itself shows this, so anyone can see: Believers aren't meant to live under the law thinking it'll justify them before God. Instead, they live by faith and grace.

Galatians 3:13
Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:
The law is a curse, and thus it now stands: ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.’ He became a curse for us.
» Deuteronomy 21:23
His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. This verse speaks of the Lord Jesus, who indeed bore the curse of the law and thereby redeemed us from that same curse. Not only from that curse, but also from the law.

Galatians 3:14
That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.
The blessing of Abraham comes to both Gentiles and Jews in Christ Jesus, completely apart from the law. This ‘blessing’ is the same as the ‘promise of the Spirit.

‘What was Abraham's blessing? God promised him eternal life, that he would ‘be heir of the world’ (Romans 4:13).
Romans 4 explains that Abraham trusted in God's life-giving power. He believed in a God who could, and would, bring life from death, just as God promised him. It's explained in detail there; it's worth reading the whole chapter.
This promise of the Spirit comes to Gentiles (and us) through faith in Christ Jesus. It could also say: ‘The blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles through faith.’ ‘In Christ Jesus’ and ‘through faith’ mean the same thing here. What kind of faith? Whose faith? It's the faith of Jesus Christ! We already covered this in Galatians 2, especially from verse 22 on, where it talks about everything coming ‘through the faith of Jesus Christ.’

Galatians 3:15
Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.
Even to a man's covenant that is confirmed, that is made, no one adds or subtracts anything. It concerns thus a covenant that is officially established and has come into effect. That is in verse 16 the covenant that God made with Abraham.

Galatians 3:16
Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.
hose promises weren't just spoken, they were written down clearly. The word ‘seed’ is singular, so it should be understood that way at first.
» Genesis 17:7-9 :
‘And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.’
‘Abraham and his seed’ in Genesis really means ‘Abraham and Christ.’ That's the Bible's own explanation in Galatians 3, ending verse 16 with: ‘thy seed, which is Christ.’ The promises went to Abraham and his Heir, one Heir, not many heirs.
As believers, we become Abraham's ‘seeds’ or heirs (plural) only because we're united with Christ, like being grafted into him as one plant (Romans 6:5). We're justified by the faith of that One, the true ‘Seed of Abraham.’ Christ is the reason for our salvation. His righteousness is credited to us, and that's repeated right in verse 17.

Galatians 3:17 - 18
And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the

inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.
The key idea in verse 16 is that God's promises were made only to Abraham and his singular ‘Seed’ (Christ), not to the people of Israel living under the law. They aren't Abraham, and they're not that one true Seed. So, what is there to boast about? And what does the law have to do with it?
The covenant with Abraham, sealed in Christ, can't be cancelled by the law (another covenant) that came 430 years later. The law doesn't override the promise or the ‘inheritance’ from verse 18; that stands firm. Later covenants, like the one with Israel at Sinai (the marriage covenant) or with David, don't cancel each other, they coexist independently. Covenant theology makes a big mistake by treating all this as basically one covenant. The Bible has at least seven (easy to spot), but the main three are: the covenant with Abraham, the one with Moses (the law), and the New Covenant. Covenant theology lumps them together. It quotes Psalm 105 about God remembering his ‘everlasting covenant’ with Abraham ‘from generation to generation’, how he freed Israel from slavery, fed them in the wilderness, and gave them Canaan, all fulfilling his promise to the patriarchs. The psalm calls Abraham's descendants to remember God's acts and stay faithful.
» Psalm 105:8-11 :
‘He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations. Which covenant he made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; And confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: Saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.’
But this isn't the law, it's not the Mosaic covenant, which is totally different. Abraham had no part in it. The Mosaic covenant (the law) is based on works: ‘The man that doeth them shall live in them’ (Leviticus 18:5). And anyone who fails to keep every part is cursed: ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them’ (Galatians 3:10, quoting Deuteronomy 27:26). That's the opposite of the Abrahamic covenant, which is all about grace and faith. No covenant theologian can claim the law covenant shares anything with the one made to Abraham's singular Seed. That's why verse 8 says God preached the gospel to Abraham first. Our salvation comes from Abraham's Seed, it's the fulfillment of God's promise to him: ‘...in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed’ (Genesis 12:3). We Gentiles today share in those promises and blessings to Abraham, secured through faith, with eternal life.

Galatians 3:19
Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.
If you get all this, the big question left is: Why have the law at all? What's its purpose?

The answer is already in Romans, and confirmed here: It was ‘added because of transgressions.’ ‘Because of’ means ‘to promote’ or ‘to increase’ them. Wherever the law rules, transgressions multiply. In practice, the law actually boosts sins, leading to more and more violations.
» Romans 4:15 :
‘Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.
‘Without law, you can't break it. But God gave the law precisely so people would break it, revealing that humans don't just sin occasionally; we're wired to sin by nature and can't do otherwise. This idea is unpacked in Romans 7 and into 8.
As Romans 3:20 puts it: ‘…by the law is the knowledge of sin.’ Not just individual sins, but sin itself, our inherited sinful nature (see also verse 13).
Romans gets blunt about it in 5:20:
‘Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.’
Where the law operates, sin (our human nature) ramps up. But that doesn't faze God, He doesn't hold sins against believers. The law is like a mirror for everyone: It proves we're all sinners, incapable of true good, no matter how noble the law's goals are.
So where sin ‘abounds,’ grace ‘abounds much more.’ No matter how much we sin, even under the law, God's grace covers it all from His endless riches. Our part? Just believe and accept Christ as Savior. John the Baptist called Him ‘the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!’ (John 1:29).
All sins are forgiven… except one: unbelief. That's what damns people, the sin of rejecting God's grace. Believers, though, embrace that grace and live from its abundance in daily life.
God was fully justified in giving a law that exposes sin, and planned the fix for the problem sin forever.
» Romans 7:18
For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.
That is the point, and one need not learn it by living under that law oneself. One can also learn it from biblical history.
If you impose a law on a man, you are thus imposing the law on a sinful nature, and thereby the man is activated, and so sin is activated. Then it also becomes clear that man is not able, despite all his good intentions, to fulfil that law, and from this it becomes evident that he clearly has a sinful nature.
God thus once gave that Law to man so that it would become clear that man is a sinner. That is important, for there are still many people, even Christians, who think that man is good by nature. That he only becomes bad through society or something similar. But man was already a sinner before there was a society. Man makes society, and if our society is not good, as many nowadays claim, then that can only be because men are so wicked. Then you should especially impose a law on him; then he will sin even more. Then society becomes even worse.

If you want to live under the law, then you do not believe. Where you choose to live under the law and do not want to believe, your sin only increases, and then you can only become more and more afraid of that same God, to whom you will one day have to give account. We also have 1 Corinthians 15:56: ‘The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.
’So where sin becomes powerful, that comes through the law. It is also mentioned there in connection with death. Hence the law activates sin, but the working of sin is in practice the working of death, and hence the law is called ‘the ministration of death’ (2 Corinthians 3:7). But what does it matter that the law is a ministration of death, if we also know ‘the ministration of the spirit’ (2 Corinthians 3:8)

Galations 3:20
And the mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.
Just as in verse 19, ‘Mediator’ is written here with a capital letter, and its wrong. I have compared various translations, but they all say something different because they have lost the thread of the argument. This verse, however, says: The mediator is not one; no, but God is One. There is indeed one God, but there are two mediators between God and man. At any rate, within this argument. In 1 Timothy 2:5, in a different context, it says: ‘For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.’ Here in Galatians 3, it is obviously also about one and the same God, but the one mediator is Moses, both from verse 19. But Moses did not bring the people into the promised land. The law could not bring about the promised blessings. The mediator Moses cannot bring man to God. That is what the apostle Paul writes to Timothy. There is only One who can truly fulfil that mediating function and bring man to God: Christ. It was the same God who, on the one hand, appointed Moses and, on the other hand, appointed Christ. But the function of Moses was literally very temporary. The phrase in verse 19: ‘ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator,’ points very clearly to the temporariness of the law. The point is that we should learn to live by faith. That we should come to a ‘mediator like Moses,’ namely Christ. To Him alone, for one ‘cannot serve two masters’ (Matthew 6:24). There are indeed two covenants, but one cannot serve both. One would have to choose for the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, whereby grace is promised to everyone who believes. The mediator of the Old Covenant is nothing other than a type of the Mediator of the New Covenant. Moses as a figure of Christ.

Galatians 3:21
Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.
In real life, the law opposes grace. So it's one or the other. But the real question is: Did the law in the Old Testament go against God's promises? No way, and that's why ‘God forbid’ fits. We already said: ‘It was added.’ Or ‘it came in besides.’ The law itself pictures the promises, showing how they'd be fulfilled one day. It points to the promises made to Abraham.

The law speaks of ‘the righteousness of God’ that would come through Christ. Hebrews has the clearest words on this.
» Hebrews 7:19
For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.
» Hebrews 10:1
For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.
Verse 21 adds that if a law had been given that could give life, then yes, righteousness would come through the law. But the Law can't do that.

Galatians 3:22
But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.
It must be established that the law was not ‘able to give life.’ The law was no power of God. ‘For the gospel is the power of God unto salvation’ (Romans 1:16). The law spells weakness
» Hebrews 7:18
‘For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof’
» Romans 8:3:
For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, conde
» 2 Corinthians 3:7
But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face

Galatians 3:23
But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.
We were locked under sin, imprisoned, so that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.
As long as that promise was not fulfilled, so long as the promised Messiah had not appeared, man was, as it were, locked up under sin. This was to demonstrate the situation: namely, that if one thinks man can be improved, it is not possible through the law.
The law is a prison, a ‘house of detention’. It is also called a ‘snare’ (Romans 11:8; 1 Corinthians 7:35). One first gets caught in it, and if one tries to escape, one only becomes more firmly ensnared. Under the law, the entire people of Israel fell into bondage to the law, but first into the bondage of Egypt. There they had to bake bricks; ‘strike the bricks’ it says in Genesis 11:3. That was done with straw, with ‘stubble’ (Exodus 5:10-13). That labour in Egypt is nothing other than the illustration of the works of the law. It leads to nothing. It only grows heavier.
But God sent deliverance, just as in the case of the fulfilment of these types. For the scripture hath concluded all under sin, thereby also under the law, so that the promise, which was much older than the law, might be given to believers. And that by faith of Jesus Christ. The coming of this

Christ, who had overcome death, was only then the moment when God fulfilled the promises made to Abraham, that one should be ‘the heir of the world’ (Romans 4:3). A promise of eternal life, but no one partook in the fulfilment except first Christ. That was what was waited for. Since the resurrection of Christ whereby He partook in the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, the same promise is fulfilled to everyone who believes, for that has been the condition from of old.
» Romans 8:29 and Colossians 1:18
8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.
The waiting was for the coming of this Man, who was not only the Seed of Abraham but equally the Son of God (Romans 1:4). He received as first part in the fulfilment of the promises, namely, in the regeneration unto the New Creation. Faith has been revealed (v. 23). What faith is, has namely been demonstrated by the Lord Jesus Christ, who successfully ran the course of His faith. He is ‘the author and finisher of our faith’ (Hebrews 12:2).
All believers are raised from the dead. They are born again, or rather, they partake in His resurrection, for that is precisely the same. We already have, as firstfruits, part in that New Creation, in that eternal life. We simply do not see it yet, but that is a matter of time.
Again: believers are saved ‘by faith of Jesus Christ’, for His faith is the basis of His resurrection. Through His faith we partake in His blessings.
» Romans 1:17
For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.
We often think that we are saved on the basis of the work that the Lord Jesus has done. The more biblical thought is that we are saved through His faith. He has indeed done a work, but it is a work whereby He obliterated the sins of the world. (1 John 2:2) Certainly the sins under the law and they are done away with. That was a work, but His resurrection is not the result of His work. His death was. His resurrection is the result of His faith.
» Romans 5:18, 19
Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.
19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.
And all this is accomplished, not out of the works of the law, nor out of the works of Jesus Christ, but ‘by the faith of Jesus Christ’. When we ‘go unto Him’, we draw near ‘to the throne of grace’ (Hebrews 4:16) and live no longer from the law, or from anything else than by the grace of God.

Galatians 3:24
Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

‘Faith’ and the name ‘Christ’ are used interchangeably, following chapter 2, in which extensive discussion was had about the faith of Jesus Christ. Where Christ appeared, there faith appeared and thus the New Covenant and thereby also the fulfilment of the promises to Abraham. From that faith of Christ we should be justified, this verse teaches. The emphasis here is on ‘was,’ for it belongs to the past. That law fulfilled a temporary function up to the resurrection of Christ, for that is what it comes down to in practice, with regard only to the people who lived under the law. Therefore, the emphasis is also on ‘our.’ Ultimately that was officially the Jewish people, and Paul, a Jew by birth, therefore says ‘the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ.’ That it is so is confirmed in the following verses.

Galatians 3:25, 26
But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.
‘But after that faith is come’, based on the preceding and following verses, means ‘when Christ came’. When Christ came, the promises to Abraham were fulfilled, and that was automatically the end of the law. Conversely: the law was ended so that the promises to Abraham could subsequently be fulfilled. That ‘we’ refers to the Jewish people, but also to Gentiles, whether one believes it or not. The idea is simply that the law was laid only upon Israel, if I may put it as broadly as possible, but that this law was nevertheless ended by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who were under the law have been freed from it ever since. Remarkably, since then there have been people who never lived under the law, but who nevertheless placed themselves under it afterwards. The more one reflects on that, the stranger it becomes.
In verse 26 it does not say ‘children’, but ‘sons of God’. Almost always, when you read ‘children’ in the Authorised Version, you can deduce from the context what it ought to be. Whether it actually says ‘children’ or ‘sons’. Unfortunately, the translators did not make the distinction, but it is essential for understanding the passage of Scripture.
The idea here is that we are no longer under the schoolmaster and thus no longer under the pedagogue and therefore no longer children, ‘for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus’. Adult heirs, then. It says ‘ye are all’, because the Gentiles, who did not have the law, did not go through that phase ‘under the schoolmaster’ at all. The Epistle to the Galatians says that those who were under the law in the past must be regarded as children, and thus as minors placed in custody. Under ‘the pedagogue’, namely the law, so that the people might learn something. It jumps from ‘we’ to ‘ye’, because one does not need to have lived under the law first in order to be reckoned among these sons of God. On the contrary, one must precisely be freed from the law in order to be reckoned among these sons of God. That is the idea, and then what the Apostle writes makes sense, because they, the Jews, are freed from the law in order indeed to become sons of God, and the Gentiles did not have the law in any case and thus it does not stand in their way to become sons of God.

Where the Lord Jesus Christ has appeared, those who were under the law are freed from the law. That is obviously not necessary for those who were never under the law, such as the Gauls, or rather Galatians, Gentiles in general, and thus the Apostle says: ‘for ye are all the children of God by faith in, not 'of' this time, Christ Jesus. By faith in him we are, or we are, united with this Christ. Where Christ Himself ended the law in his death and resurrection, we are in Christ therefore free from the law, freed in Him

Galatians 3:27

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Here it is not about baptism in water, that is not stated either, let alone baptism with water (sprinkling). It says ‘baptized into Christ.’ The thought is namely that ‘baptizing’ presupposes ‘becoming one with Him’. That is the only true meaning of the term. With baptizing we inevitably think of a liquid, but that is not entirely the thought of the original word. The English simply did not translate it, and ‘baptizo’ thus became an English word, ‘to baptize.’ But in many cases where baptism is spoken of in the Bible it is not about baptism in water or liquid, but about ‘baptism into Christ,’ or baptism in, by or with, the Holy Spirit.

» Romans 6:3-5

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

No water comes into play here. What it means to be ‘baptized into Jesus Christ, into His death’ is already explained in Romans 5. Especially in the second half of the chapter. As we by nature shared in Adam and were thus actually ‘baptized into Adam,’ we are one with Adam, so by regeneration we have become one with Christ and have received His Nature, His Life. It is extensively set forth there. By birth we shared in Adam's disobedience. By regeneration we share in His obedience, say faith, for that is what it comes down to.

Right at the beginning of chapter 6 Paul asks: ‘Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?’ No, for ‘we are dead to sin.’ We are reckoned not to share in that old man, in Adam, from God's side at any rate, because we share in that last Adam, namely Christ. We are reckoned to live ‘to the glory of the Father,’ even so we also should walk in newness of life (verse 4).

That is another life, in which we should serve God. Now that we are regenerated, baptized into Christ, to be one plant, a living organism, a living body, in the likeness of His death, so shall we also be in His resurrection, knowing ‘that our old man is crucified with him,’ and that we have received New Life with and in Christ, as the following verses of Romans 6 confirm. A similar expression is used here in Galatians 3:27: ‘For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.’ I am inclined not to speak at all about water baptism; there is really no occasion for it. Water baptism is after all the expression, a picture, a type,

of our baptism into Christ. Water is a picture of death. When one goes into it and comes out again, rises out of it again, it is a picture of resurrection. So we have become one with Him ‘in the likeness of his death,’ and subsequently also ‘in the likeness of his resurrection.’
‘Have put on Christ’ means: ‘ye are clothed with Christ,’ for ‘put on’ means ‘clothe yourselves with,’ in the sense of putting on a new garment. Then I end up in Matthew 9. If the garment is torn, it says, then one does not patch that old garment by putting a new patch on it. You had better not do that, for then the tear will arise again and even become larger, because that new patch and the old garment do not agree with each other. That is exactly what it is also about here. Now that we have become New Creatures in Him, we lead a fundamentally totally different life. That old garment, also in Matthew 9, is a portrayal of life under the law, life outwardly. That is done away with. One should put on a New Garment, that is the thought.
In Matthew 9 the question was: ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?’ Fasting is part of the Jewish tradition, and the Lord Jesus and His disciples do not do that. Then He gives among other things this answer: One does not put a new patch on an old garment, but one takes a whole new garment. In that New Life the institutions, ordinances, of the law no longer occur. The same applies to the picture of new wine in old bottles, also Matthew 9. New wine is a picture of the life of the New Covenant and that does not go into the old covering. That does not go into an old bottle, but into a new bottle. That indeed belongs to a new walk of life. ‘… that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter’ (Romans 7:6).

Galatians 3:28
There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
The distinction between Jew and Greek no longer exists, in the context of the preceding verse. That has everything to do with lifestyle, with outward things, with a garment. ‘Bond’ means slave. And also the distinction between male and female is not made, ‘for ye are all one in Christ Jesus’; ‘one plant.’ All those old distinctions have disappeared therein.

Galatians 3:29
And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.
Christ is the true ‘seed’ (descendant) of Abraham (as Paul already noted in verse 16). If we're united with Christ, we become Abraham's seed too. This makes us heirs to God's ancient promises, not like immature children, but full-grown sons with full rights.
Believers are now ‘sons’ (mature adults) under the New Covenant. We're double heirs:

- To Abraham's blessings (earthly/spiritual promises).
- To God Himself (as adopted family, per Romans 8).

Paul shifts to the past, reminding us of life under the old Law, like being stuck in childhood custody, not freedom.

Galatians 4:1
Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;
Verse 1 starts with ‘Now I say,’ is Paul trying to clarify on some basic truths already known. He says as long as the heir is a child,’ meaning a minor, he has no voice. A child counts as a minor because it has nothing to say. As long as the heir is a child, ‘he differs nothing from a servant’, a slave, or bondsman. The child belongs to the parents. In the Bible a child has no legal rights on its own, it gets them from the parents. It shares in the parents' status because it's their property and isn't seen as independent since it's a minor. So as long as the heir is a child, he differeth nothing from a slave, ‘though he be lord of all.’
If you say ‘lord’ in English like ‘heir,’ it suddenly sounds like ‘heir.’ A lord is, by definition, an heir. So he's heir to everything, in a way, owner of it all, but in reality, not yet. It waits for the future, when those things become real, and the inheritance isn't just claimed but fully lived out.

Galatians 4:2
But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.
The word ‘tutor’ shows up elsewhere too, like in Matthew 20:8, where it's translated correctly as ‘steward’, meaning ‘manager,’ which is dead right. The child ‘is under tutors’, under managers. In Greek, it's ‘oikonomos.’ That right away reminds us of ‘oikonomia,’ which gets translated as ‘dispensation’, a stewardship. We're talking about dispensations here. It's the ‘household of the law,’ the ‘dispensation of the law,’ changed to the household (Zechariah 14:17) or ‘dispensation of grace.’ Sure, the Bible has plenty more dispensations, but these two are by far the most key for us today. The law's dispensation is history, that's the big takeaway. Remember, we live in a dispensation with totally flipped house rules: not law, but grace.
» Ephesians 3:2
If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:
The apostle explains how Christ's death and resurrection wrapped up the dispensation of the law commencing the dispensation of grace, the one we're in now. ‘Until the time appointed of the father’ means God Himself set the start and end for when Israel, the Jewish people, would live under the Law. That's from Sinai to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, who became the Christ.

Galatians 4:3.
Right at the beginning, in Genesis 2, it is about ‘knowledge of good and evil’ and that is of course nothing other than the law. Adam and Eve belonged to the ‘the elements of the world’. Wherever we encounter this expression in the Bible, we should think of law. Law in general and the Mosaic Law in particular. That all has to do with the visible, the garment, we cloth ourselves in. The elements of the world concern worldly matters. About things of a world that in practice is governed by Satan. If the world

were not governed by Satan, but by God, what sense would there still be in giving a law? The world is governed by Satan and thus the law.

Galatians 4:4
But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
There is no reason to philosophise about the concept ‘fulness of the time’. Many do that, books have been written about it. It is simply ‘the fulness of the time appointed of the father’, for the law would be, from Sinai, until he death and resurrection of Christ. When that time is reached, that time of the law is fulfilled. God set that exact timeline. It's when the child becomes a Son, made adult and is freed from its ‘tutors and governors,’ or from the law itself. That's the bottom line. Then the child has to stand on its own and choose its path. The big question: Will it serve the Father? That's the heart of it, especially for the Jewish people. They didn't, so that nation won't be appointed as son just yet. Sure, they're redeemed from the law, the upbringing's over, but it didn't stick; the people didn't believe. In the future, it'll happen, though. Once they learn wisdom the hard way, through loss and shame, things might turn out right after all.
Since the law came, folks have been waiting for it to vanish. For redemption from the law, leading to justification and even rebirth through the faith of Jesus Christ. All based on what's here in Galatians.
‘Made of a woman, made under the law’ is a fine point, but the idea is that a woman is tied to her man by ‘the law of her husband’ (Romans 7:2). The birth of the Lord Jesus, the Man, the Son, from the woman shows how the New Covenant springs from the Old. The old gets scrapped, and the Son is born, or steps in. There's always the picture of Rachel and Benjamin's birth in the background. The mother dies as the son is born (Genesis 35:18). If a New Creation has to show up down the line, the old one fades away and no room is left for it.

Galatians 4:5
To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
Christ came, that's the key point here, in the Epistle's context, to redeem those under the law. He redeems us from sin, from sin's power, from death's power, from the old creation, from our guilt, and maybe more. But first and foremost, He redeems from the law, which weighed on that old creation and the flesh. Christ redeems those under the law, so they ‘might receive the adoption of sons’ (Romans 8:23), right at ‘the time appointed of the father.’
The child would be set as a son. See Zechariah 18.
The Jewish people, that's who this is about, lived under the law and were treated like children and minors. They were redeemed from the law, so afterward, and because of it, they would be appointed as sons. Reading verse 5 this way, I notice it was the plan, but it didn't happen.
It was meant for the people. The Gospel, ‘the power of God unto salvation,’ was first for the Jew (Romans 1:16). It was definitely the intent for them to get the adoption of sons, making them the first nation in the

Kingdom, in the New Covenant. This is about setting a whole people as firstborn among the nations. The King of that Kingdom was a Jew: the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish people should have been the first to enjoy its blessings. That's how it'll go in the future, at Christ's return. But it didn't happen at His first coming.
That Jewish people back then, even after His resurrection, officially, at the government level, made it clear, time and again over decades: ‘We will not have this man to reign over us’ (Luke 19:14). The Jewish people rejected their own King.
Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

Galatians 4:6
And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
When the Apostle then speaks of sons, he does not say ‘we’, but ‘you’. This concerns the believers from among the Gentiles in general. That is the Church, whether it be in Galatia or in Ephesus, it makes no difference. ‘Because you are sons’ means that the birthright came to another people, namely the Church. In the Epistle to the Romans, a more or less similar thought is developed, also with like expressions. In Romans 8:14 it is said: ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God’ (= ‘huios’ of God).
It is then explained: Romans 8:15 ‘For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father’ (= appointment to sons; ‘huiothesia’). Although the terms are a little different, it must nevertheless be clear that it concerns exactly the same things. In Romans 8, it is not so much spoken of the Church as such, but of the members of the Church, the believers. Concerning them and to them it is said that their ultimate individual appointment to sons takes place only at the redemption of their body.
» Romans 8:23
‘And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body’ (= appointment to sons; ‘huiothesia’). In Galatians 4, it is not so much about the individual believers, but about the Church as such, whereby the idea is that sonship was already applicable to Israel, from the exodus out of Egypt, from the beginning of the law, after which, with the coming of Christ and the ending of the law, it should be appointed as son (heir). We are connected with Christ because His Spirit dwells in us and that one cries: ‘Abba Father’. The idea is that we do not only, although it begins with that, cry ‘Abba Father’ with the mouth, and thus call God our Father, but that we live as children of God. Only then do we acknowledge God in the practice of our life, when we acknowledge Him as our Father. So that we ‘walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called’ (Ephesians 4:1).
‘Abba Father’ is twice ‘Father’. The first is more or less Hebrew and the second Greek. Why is that? Thereby the concept ‘appointment to sons’, which is discussed here, is connected with the Old Testament. That

appointment to sons is probably not even a known concept among the Greeks, but in any case it is among the Jews. Whether it played an important role in their life practice, I dare to doubt, but in Biblical history, it plays a very important role. The first book of the Bible is actually about nothing else. About who has the birthright? Beginning with Cain or Abel. It should have been Cain, but he forfeited it because he slew his brother, so another seed had to be put in the place of Abel. That was Seth and therefore he is also so named: 'Appointed'. After that, it plays an important role in the history of Genesis. Not in every generation, but certainly where generations are described more extensively.

Galatians 4:7
Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.
'So then', 'thus in this way' we are sons of God, according to the reasoning of Galatians. According to Romans 8 we are not yet sons of God, but we shall be sons. The intention is that we should live as sons of God, so as subsequently to be officially appointed as sons of God. In Ephesians that is also the thought.
» Ephesians 1:5
Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, (= appointment as sons; 'huiothesia').
We have been predestinated (determined) beforehand to appointment as sons. But according to the reasoning in Galatians 4, 'so then', 'in this way', we are already sons. Living under the New Covenant, we have received a share in the church of the firstfruits and therefore: 'thou art no more a servant, but a son'. It does not stop there: 'and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ'. That is possible because we 'have been baptised into Him' and have received a share in His birthright, His position, His inheritance. We should hold fast to that and not 'exchange' it for the earthly, as Esau did. (Hebrews 12:16)

Galatians 4:8
Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods;
Then, in the past, when you were a child, under the Old Covenant, 'when ye knew not God', before one was faithful and added to the church, 'they served those which by nature are no gods'. Paul might have said: we were under the law and you served the demons, for that is what it amounts to. Heathens formerly served, 'those which by nature are no gods'. In practice they were, because by man they were promoted to gods. » 1 Corinthians 8:4
As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one.
What one considers to be gods, idols therefore, are in reality demons. Those are approximately the lowest kind of spiritual and invisible beings

that we know from the Bible. So those that one formerly served are certainly not gods.

Galatians 4:9
But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?
‘And now’ stands in contrast to ‘then’ from verse 8. The subtlety in these statements is that if you read them as accurately as possible, the apostle actually says that if you live under the law, you are actually serving idols. I did not invent it. I did not write it either, but it is what it stands. Previously ‘they served those who by nature are not gods’, verse 8. What then are those ‘weak and poor principles’, under which one places oneself again. That is the law, which in verse 3 is called ‘the first principles of the world’. That is still what it is about here. In verses 8 and 9, living under the law and serving idols thus coincide. Who is the one who wants us not to believe? And then the next question: why is it that the Jewish people did not come to faith? The first answer is: the devil. The second answer is: the law. Which means that the devil has made himself master of the law. According to Hebrews 2, Satan is the one ‘who had the power of death’. Who had the power of death, who uses death as a weapon. Well, the law is a ‘ministration of death’. (2 Corinthians 3:7) The devil makes use of the law, of something that God has given, something holy, to achieve his goals. And he succeeds in that too. For in connection with the Jewish people, that has happened. That is a visible example from human history. How does that go then with a people living under the law? What does it lead to? To unbelief, for that is what the Scripture says about a Jewish people. Just as the world of the Greeks did not know God through wisdom, because their own wisdom stood in their way. And just as the Jews did not know God, did not come to faith, because the law stood in their way. We see that the devil makes use of wisdom and of the law. Where the law is no longer so popular among people in general, so-called science takes its place. For to one, the law is religion and to the other it is science. One places the law above religion, above the true religion namely, above serving God. The other places science at the top. The Bible is always subordinated. Either to the law or to science. And then there is the category that combines law and science. Who uses science to be able to apply the law, to be able to bring people under the law. That all happens. It has one and the same goal, namely to prevent man from going to the Lord Jesus. That applies to unbelievers, but just as much to the person who is already born again. Who is hindered by the same things from living according to the riches of God’s grace. In such a way that Christ cannot do His work in him. If the devil cannot keep man from coming to faith, he will keep the believer from living out of faith. They are strong words, I know, but they are nonetheless the thoughts that the Apostle brings forward here. The thought is that we are redeemed from ‘the present evil world’, which is ruled by Satan and by the law. By both. What the Lord says about the Jewish people cannot be misunderstood.
» Matthew 12:43-45

When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. 44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. 45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.
He says: do you know how that goes with a man? He is possessed by a demon, an evil spirit, and that is then cast out. But if something better does not come in its place there, then that ‘house’, that man, remains empty, but nice and clean. What does that demon do then? That evil spirit simply comes back and takes seven other even more wicked spirits with it. The last of that man is worse than the first. And then comes the application: ‘even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation’. That is simply the description of the Jewish people, who were delivered from the law. After which no other Spirit comes in, because one does not come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what happens therefore is that the delivered people then come to live even more heavily under the law than ever before. Do you know what effect demons have in man? Certainly in the Bible. It makes man deaf or blind. What is the effect of the law in man? According to the Bible, it is exactly the same: a covering over the eyes and closed ears, which results in a covering over the heart. One is delivered from ‘weak and poor principles’. How then can one return to precisely those things, which one ‘wants to serve again from the beginning’? The Apostle says in verse 10, what that roughly consists of. We do not find those serious things at all, but it is written there.

Galatians 4:10
Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.
It will be clear that they evidently did that according to the Old Testament Jewish calendar. Should believers then not observe days and months and times and years? No, they must not! That is permitted, as long as it at least does not deprive the freedom. We should forgo everything that takes away our freedom in Christ. The moment we think that we should observe ‘days and months and times and years’ by God’s command, then we are wrong. If we think it is not necessary, because God has set us free, and yet we do observe it, then there is nothing wrong with that in itself. That is stated in:
» Romans 14:5
One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
One does that to serve the Lord, and if that is truly the case, and not because it must be, but in freedom, that is fine. If we want to dedicate a time of our life or a day of our life or a day of the week specially to the Lord, that is good. But why not all days?
For that is obviously better. Why only a sabbatical year and not all years? Not to mention the year of jubilee. For those can only be the years spoken of here. Why not everything? You can say that the first day of the week is a special day for the Lord. But what about the other days?

There is nothing wrong with us setting aside a day in the week for certain religious matters, to serve the Lord. Of course that is good but better would be to dedicate all days to it. Only at the moment that we think it must be, because God wants it, then I ask: where does it say that in the Bible? Where does it say in the Bible that we as believers should live under the law?
'You observe days and months and times and years' is symptomatic of the legalistic, unfree, imprisoned slave life of these Galatians. The Apostle just points to those simple things.

Galatians 4:11
am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.
Paul is actually writing: 'I must fear that I have laboured in vain among you to some extent and that you have not understood the Gospel'. After which he says:

Galatians 4:12
Brethren, I beseech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.
'Be as I am' is one of the variants on the statement that he so often makes: 'Be ye followers of me'. (e.g. 1 Corinthians 11:1) Do as I do, for Paul not only has the Word to proclaim to the believers, but moreover he is expected to be the example for the practical life of the believers. This applies, by the way, to every leader according to the Bible. He is expected to be an example for the flock. 'For I am as ye are: brethren' means that he, just like them, is born again. A child of God, not by works, but by faith. Where he would set the example, they would follow it. Principally, there is in fact no difference between Paul and the Galatians. In practice, however, sadly there is. So the Apostle says that they would do well to follow his example. Next, Paul points to something that he evidently cannot quite place himself. For he says 'brethren, I beseech you'. I ask you therefore, 'ye have not injured me at all'. And then:

Galatians 4:13, 14
Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. 14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.
Under what circumstances Paul first preached the gospel to them, we do not know. But it was 'through infirmity of the flesh'. However, he was not rejected for it. They received him instead as 'an angel of God', as God's messenger, for the word 'angel' fundamentally means 'messenger'. They received him as if he were the Lord himself and not the one who merely came with the message of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then he poses the question in verse 15:

Galatians 4:15
Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? In other words: why did you actually do that? What did you see in it? Why were you so pleased with it then? Why did you have compassion on me at that time? What benefit did you see in it for yourself? Evidently they saw benefit or blessing in it, for they would even, so to speak, have ‘plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me’, if that had been possible. From which it follows that the Apostle evidently had problems with his eyes. In any case, they saw in him a friend and accepted his word. They came to faith.

Galatians 4:16
Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?
He told the truth then too, but ‘because I tell you the truth’ he evidently became their enemy. For now they regard him as their enemy, because he preaches that they should not live under the law. It is much the same as with the Corinthians. With them it was not so much about the law, but about fleshly things. In practice, however, it concerned the same things, namely those of the flesh. Why does the apostle say this? Paul was with them in weakness and in temptation, according to the flesh. By that he was no man to whom one would look up. No powerful figure. That is what the Corinthians reproach him for. But these Galatians are evidently now being led by truly powerful figures. Only they are those fellows who place them under the law.

Galatians 4:17
They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude us, that ye might affect them.
The Apostle Paul addresses a troubling dynamic among the Galatians, where certain influences threaten the liberty they have in Christ. The emphasis here falls squarely on ‘they’, those unnamed figures who disrupt the community, and on Paul's poignant words: ‘for they zealously affect you, but not well’ (Galatians 4:17, KJV). What Paul formerly did was right: he brought them the Truth, and he continues to do so faithfully. But ‘they’, instead of proclaiming the gospel of grace, they sought to bind the believers under the law.
Why did they do this? Paul cuts to the heart: ‘they would exclude us, that ye might affect them’ (Galatians 4:17, KJV). This reveals a purely human motive, driven by self-interest. Evidently, there were leaders among the Galatians attempting to sideline Paul and his companions, all to consolidate power for themselves over the flock. Such control can only be achieved by imposing obligations, bringing people under law, whatever form it takes. If you aim to subjugate believers with your own rules, they will see through the facade. Thus, one resorts to more ‘traditional’ laws, preferably those drawn from Scripture, to lend an air of authority.
In practice, these leaders placed the Galatians under law, but their true goal was subjection to their own power, from which they could derive personal advantage. Elsewhere, this is condemned as seeking ministry ‘for filthy lucre’ (1 Timothy 6:5; 1 Peter 5:2, KJV). Among people, there is always this pull: one seeks dominance over another. It often starts with a desire to be important, exercised through influence, which can seem

decent enough. But it frequently escalates to raw power: You must do this. You must do that. Otherwise... Imposing such demands is nothing less than bringing believers under law, when the only power that should operate in them is the strength from above, the Spirit of Christ dwelling within (Romans 8:9-11).Where someone tries to exclude Paul, they inevitably exclude Christ Himself, and that appears to be their very intention. In gatherings where believers are truly free, assembling in all liberty, there lurks the risk of ‘false brethren unawares brought in’ (Galatians 2:4, KJV). These infiltrators aim to curtail that freedom, compelling believers to serve their power, perhaps even to prop up the leaders' own vision of ‘church.’ This pattern persists even in our time. What it should be about is whether the Lord is served, for in serving Him, the Church is served. If we pursue self-service, the Lord goes unserved, and all is wrong. Those hungering for influence or power over people have no business desiring ‘the office of a bishop’ (1 Timothy 3:1, KJV). It is a deadly danger. People driven by such ambitions should never be permitted to lead in the Church, no matter their talents or gifts.
This very issue plagued the churches in Corinth and Galatia: other figures arrived with bold rhetoric and a far more imposing presence than the humble Apostle Paul. They imposed their ways, but in doing so, they quenched the Spirit's work. When human power supplants divine freedom, the life of Christ fades, leaving only bondage in its wake.

Galatians 4:18, 19
But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you; 19 My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.
The apostle Paul exhausts himself to resolve the issue, in all possible, and perhaps even impossible, ways. He speaks to them and explains to them how things really stand with the law, what the function of the law is, how the law, the Old Covenant, relates to the New Covenant. He has just done that in the first half of Galatians 4.

Galatians 4:20
I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you. Before the Apostle begins his account, he says: ‘I desire to be present with you now’, for that would give him more possibilities; then he could change his voice to support the words, for example. Spoken words are generally stronger than written words.
Paul then says: ‘I stand in doubt of you’. He is not certain of these believers in Galatia. That is logical, for there is a very simple thought behind it, and that is promptly brought forward in verse 21.

Galatians 4:21
Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?
It may be that the Galatians thought they had to live under the laws, but at the same time they give proof of not knowing the law. That is always the case, by the way, for one can only claim to have to live under the law if one does not know the law. Here it concerns the Torah, and the Jew

thinks first of the books of Moses. The Apostle therefore promptly refers to that as well, when he sets before them a history, obviously as an example. (1 Corinthians 10:11) The Old Covenant, the law, is an illustration, a shadow, a depiction, a type, of the New Covenant. But where the New Covenant has come, the Old has no function whatsoever any more.

Galatians 4:22, 23
For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise.
The matter of Ishmael and Isaac, the two sons of Abraham, is briefly told. Ishmael, the eldest, should on that ground receive the birthright and thus become heir to God's promises to Abraham. But history went differently; the inheritance went to Isaac, the second son, but that happens so often in the Bible. One is continually passed over. The inheritance always goes to the next. That is what is referred to here in Galatians. The meaning is simple enough; I shall give it in advance. The promised salvation was indeed promised to the Jewish people, but it came to what we call the Church. Ishmael is a picture of the Jewish people in our days, still living under the law. Isaac is a picture of the Church, living under grace. ‘Do ye not hear the law?’ For it is written that Abraham was to inherit the blessings he had received. But Abraham's heir had to be a free man and not a slave. And so the heir did not come from Ishmael, born of a slave woman, but from Isaac, born of a free woman. One generation earlier we find the same relationship in Hagar and Sarah, for they represent the same thing. Just like Esau and Jacob, and Leah and Rachel. That repeats itself many times. So that contrast is mentioned a few times. ‘By promise’ means that when God promised Abraham a son, God was not thinking of Ishmael, but of Isaac. When God promised Abraham a son, He was not thinking of Hagar, but of Sarah. (Genesis 18:10, 14) Paul therefore says: it may well be that you descend from Abraham, but that means nothing, for if you are a slave, you will not inherit. You must be a ‘free’ one, a son (heir) to inherit.

Galatians 4:24-26
Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.
It is all about what God intended to make known by recounting this history. They are written down for us so that we might know that the one who believes is reckoned righteous by God. They have a ‘significance’, a ‘meaning’ therefore. They have an application to our days, whereby the difference between the Church, Isaac, Israel, and Ishmael is indicated. That is the superficial explanation. So the Jewish people, just like Ishmael, have been set aside, and Isaac, namely, the church, has come in their place. But it is much more than that, and in the context in which it stands, it also has an ‘other meaning’, an ‘other significance’. This is true enough,

but something far more important lies behind it. Namely, that the people who lived under the law, who were slaves, were set aside. And those who are free are put in their place. If we have been placed in the stead of the Jewish people, in the stead of Israel, because we are free and live under the New Covenant, it is at the very least unjust, but actually blasphemous, to continue living as though we were slaves. To consciously place ourselves under slavery, not only to sin (Romans 6), but also to the slavery of the law (Romans 6 and 7). We ought rather to place ourselves under the rule of the Spirit. Spirit of God leads us unto the adoption of sons, as Romans 8 declares. By that we would be led, and not by a law imposed from on high by anyone whatsoever. One ought to live out of the Word of God, and nothing else.
In verse 24 the ‘two covenants’ are set against one another, namely the Old Covenant over against the New Covenant. That is ‘the Law’ over against ‘the grace’. Next, ‘Sinai’ stands over against ‘Zion’, that is, Jerusalem, but that is only mentioned in verse 25, where Sinai ‘correspondeth to Jerusalem which now is’. That is the designation of Judaism as such, the Jewish religion, governed by the law, but on the other side by Jerusalem. The term ‘Jerusalem’ throughout the whole Bible is the designation of a Kingdom, but ‘Jerusalem which now is’ is the designation of Judaism, the Jewish people living under the law.

Whereupon the contrast is made with ‘Jerusalem which is above’, verse 26. It is altogether the same as the heavenly Jerusalem, ‘the city of the living God’ of Hebrews 12:22. ‘Jerusalem which now is’ corresponds to ‘Sinai’ and thus to the law. Jerusalem is under the law. Over against that stands ‘Jerusalem which is above’. What is lacking in the series is a Jerusalem which shall be below. Just as in Hebrews 12. ‘Jerusalem which shall be below’ is namely the operation of the New Covenant in the future over the Jewish people in particular and Israel in general, and also the Gentiles in the revelation of the Kingdom of Christ. He restores, He rebuilds, then Jerusalem, but that is not even mentioned, and hence some lose the thread.
For the Jerusalem which now is is expressed by Hagar, by the bondwoman, by Ishmael, by the flesh, by Sinai, by the Old Covenant. That is bondage. The Jerusalem of which we have become partakers is depicted by Sarah (her name means ‘princess’), by ‘the freewoman’, for we have been made free.
This is a powerful passage in which Paul provides an allegorical interpretation of the story of Hagar and Sarah from Genesis 21. Your text offers a rich explanation, with emphasis on the spiritual freedom under the New Covenant.
Verse 24: ‘These are matters that have another meaning; for these women represent the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai, which gives birth to bondage, that is Hagar.’

- Verse 25: ‘For this Hagar is Sinai, a mountain in Arabia, and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, which is in bondage with her children.’

- Verse 26: ‘But the Jerusalem that is above is free and is the mother of us all.’

Paul uses the Old Testament story here (Hagar as the slave woman, Sarah as the free woman) as an allegory to explain things that have another meaning.
It is not about the literal history, but about what God intends to reveal through it for our life of faith. As you rightly observe it is written so that we may know that the believer is reckoned righteous by faith, not by works of the law

A sketch to contrasts the Old and New

Element	Old Covenant (Hagar/Sinai)	New Covenant (Sarah/Jerusalem above)
Woman/ Mother	Hagar (slave, born of the flesh)	Sarah (free woman, 'princess')
Mountain/ City	Sinai (law, slavery)	Jerusalem above (grace, freedom)
Children	Ishmael (flesh, under the law)	Isaac (faith, Spirit)
Status	Bondage (slavery to sin and law; Romans 6-7)	Freedom (sonship through the Spirit; Romans 8:14-17)
Current Application	Earthly Jerusalem (Judaism under the law)	Heavenly Kingdom (Church as heirs)
	Set aside (not fulfilled in	Descends to earth (Revelation 21:2;

Galatians 4:27
For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.
This is a quotation from the Old Testament, in support of the story of Ishmael and Isaac, and of Hagar and Sarah. Immediately after chapter 53 of Isaiah, which speaks of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, it says:
» Isaiah 54:1
Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.
‘Sing joyfully’ has to do with the name of Isaac, for his name means ‘God hath made me to laugh’ (Genesis 21:6). From the context of Galatians it is clear that it concerns Sarah and Hagar. Hagar is a type of Israel, and

Sarah is too. The one was a bondwoman, the other was free, so that the bondwoman Hagar is a type of that part of Israel which was in bondage under the law, the two tribes. Sarah is a type of that part of Israel which was not under the law, namely the ten tribes of Israel. The ten tribes of Israel were scattered throughout the world and were in that way desolate, lonely. They had not the Husband. Sarah was barren and bare not. ‘Break forth’ is in Hebrew the same as ‘be fruitful’. ‘Break forth and cry’ is to cry out in connection with childbirth. The woman is expected to ‘break forth’; such a thing happens with violence, especially when it concerns a firstborn. ‘The children of the desolate’ must be Sarah, and ‘she which hath an husband’ is thus evidently Hagar. Not so much because she was married to Abraham, but there at least conception took place. Sarah is called ‘the desolate’ because there was no conception between Abraham and Sarah. She was and remained barren. Here it is said that ‘the children of the desolate’ would be ‘many more’ than the children of the married. ‘Many more’ can mean ‘more in number’; in that case it means that the Church, for it is applied thereto, shall be greater than Israel under the law, the Jewish people as such. On another occasion the apostle Paul uses it in the sense of ‘much higher in rank’. The Church of today partakes of that new Jerusalem which is already now in heaven, and that is much higher than the earth. The Lord Jesus used the term moreover. He said: ‘A greater than Solomon is here’ (Matthew 12:42). He was greater than Solomon. The prophecy concerning Israel in Isaiah 54 shall in the future receive its application, but at the same time it is applied in Galatians 4 to the Church of today.. That Church comes, also according to this prophecy, not from Hagar but from Sarah, and thus not from the two but from the ten tribes, and therewith from the freedom.

Galatians 4:28
Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. ‘We, brethren, are children of the promise’ and not ‘children of the flesh’, like Ishmael.
We are as Isaac and thus we are free. In verse 23, that is discussed without naming the names. The promises which God had once made to Abraham and his seed would beforehand be inherited by Isaac. That God had already determined before Ishmael was born. Ishmael proves to be a type of Israel living under the law, and Isaac a type of the Church which is enrolled in heaven, in ‘Jerusalem which is above’.
Thus when God made promises to Abraham, it was already settled that those promises would not be fulfilled by the law (the bondage) but by the Church which would come into being later. It was even the thought that if that promise were fulfilled, then Israel under the law would be cast out, just as Ishmael was cast out.

Galatians 4:29, 30
But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Those Galatians generally lived under the law; nevertheless, the Apostle writes to them: ‘we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free’. The problem is that they do not live accordingly. They are free, as believers, but they use that freedom to place themselves in bondage. And that while the Lord has precisely redeemed us from that bondage, so that we might live in freedom. These Galatians were therefore going exactly in the wrong direction. Verse 30 says: because the free is greater and higher than a slave, the slave shall not inherit with the free. The verse begins with: ‘What saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son’. (Genesis 21:10) The intention of this Scripture passage is that the believers in Galatia, and we too, should realise that we do not live under that Old Covenant, but under the New Covenant. Moreover, in a heavenly position, and that is the main theme that is developed in Hebrews. Hence the correspondence between Galatians and Hebrews. They both speak about the relationship between the Old and New Covenant and thus about the relationship between law and grace. In Hebrews it is extensively explained that the High Priest of that New Covenant, and thus our Head, has received a heavenly position and that we share in that heavenly position. In the following dispensation, after the rapture of the Church and after the second coming of Christ, you get the same kind of thoughts. Namely, that one does not live under the Old Covenant and under Moses, but under the New Covenant, and thus under Christ, and that one should not approach ‘the throne of the law’, but the ‘throne of grace’. (Hebrews 4:16)

Galatians 4:31
So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.
With this conclusion, ‘so then’, Galatians 4 ends, which turns out to be the foundation for what follows in the last two chapters of the Bible book of Galatians.

Galatians 5:1
Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.
The little word ‘therefore’ in verse 1 points back to what precedes it. On the basis of the preceding narrative(s), we, particularly the Galatians, are called to assume a position in that freedom which we have received from Christ. For He is the one, it is said here, who hath ‘redeemed us out of the house of bondage’. That is a statement from the Old Testament in connection with the redemption from slavery in Egypt (e.g. Exodus 20:2, ‘I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage’). The slavery of Israel in Egypt is a type of the later slavery of that same Israel under the law. The exodus from Egypt serves as a pattern for the redemption in which we have come to share. We have been redeemed from the slavery of the law and from the Old Covenant. We have been brought into freedom, even though it be a wilderness, in order that we might celebrate the feast of the New Covenant in freedom. That glad tidings, the laughter of Isaac, from the preceding Scripture.

The general call to believers is to stand fast, to hold one's ground. Here it concerns standing fast ‘in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free’. The purpose is that we as children of God should serve the true God, so that in the age to come, as a reward and as the outcome thereof, we should be appointed as sons of God. But where we continue to live in slavery, there is little reason to suppose that we, children of God, shall ever be appointed as sons.
Men are not inclined to seek freedom. Neither the natural man nor believers are. There is a simple, relatively philosophical, explanation for this. Where a man stands in freedom, he bears the full responsibility. Where a man is governed by something or someone else, that other bears the full responsibility. Someone else must then, for example, make decisions. If things go wrong afterwards, it is his fault. The purpose is that we as believers should take full responsibility for our lives, and that can be very straightforward, because simultaneously, if all is well, we place our lives under the dominion of grace. We make our lives available to the High Priest of the New Covenant, so that under His direction we should serve the living God, as priests. The Lord is plainly able to ‘work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure’. (Philippians 2:13) Where we dedicate ourselves to Him, He performs His work in us. Then is Christ of ‘profit’, but He is not if ye ‘be circumcised’, namely if ye place yourselves under the law, saith verse 2.

Galatians 5:2-4
‘Christ is of no use to you’, that is ‘not profitable’ in verse 2 and subsequently: ‘ye are fallen from grace’. That is said to believers, for whom Christ was already useful. For the question is:
What is, after our regeneration and the receiving of ‘all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ’ (Ephesians 1:3),
What does the Lord now do for us, now that we are believers? He builds His Church. Not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. He cares for the growth of the individual believers and thereby for the growth of the Church. The Spirit in us would lead us to sonship (Romans 8). It has everything to do with our daily life. In that, the Lord will lead our lives, if we do not ‘let ourselves be circumcised’. Believers let themselves be circumcised, because it was in the law. Paul says: if you start with the law, then you must keep it entirely.
What is the point of submitting yourself to that part of the law that you choose yourself? It is either entirely or not at all. Entirely is impossible, because no one can do that. So: do not even start with it, is the idea. Do not even try, not even to keep a part of the law.
What is the use of Christ? For what purpose should we make ourselves available for the service under the High Priest of the New Covenant? For what purpose do we come to Christ?
» Hebrews 4:16
Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

‘Grace’ and ‘mercy’ are the same thing. For what purpose would we receive ‘help in time of need’? Help, obviously, to serve God. We make our lives available to Christ, so that He might be useful to us.
Those three expressions, ‘Christ is of no use to you’, ‘Christ is vain to you’ and ‘fallen from grace’ indicate what the use of Christ is. Namely, that He gives us grace. Obviously to serve the living God. Despite our sins, despite our shortcomings, despite the fact that we still live in a humbled body, we have been made able to serve the living God. We approach God through Christ and God approaches us through Christ. God sees us in Christ as perfect. And when a work must be done for the building up of the Church, the commission is given to Christ. He carries it out through us. Through the members of His Body. Through the priests, who are under His responsibility.
And therefore: ‘Stand fast therefore in the liberty’. If we are not free, but slaves, how then could we serve God?
» Matthew 6:24
No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.
The Lord spoke here about the Old and the New Covenant, which you cannot serve both at the same time. Where one is a ‘bondservant’ (slave), one has no say over oneself. Then one cannot even choose to serve that living God. But now that we, by God through Christ, have been drawn away from the slavery of law, sin, and death, we are free from that slavery. The intention is that now that we are free, we make ourselves available for service to Him. But if you are not aware of the freedom with which Christ has made us free, you cannot consciously serve the living God. Where one does not know that freedom, and thus is in bondage under the law, there God is very far away. Then one knows that He exists, but hopefully far away and you cannot come to Him.
The Lord wants to use our old body, through that New Life in this old body. The Lord wants to use this old creation for His glory. He has first done that and thereby demonstrated it, for everything that happens on earth is a demonstration of what it is like when you tell that sinful man what he must do and not do. What comes of it then. It certainly does not get better. He showed that when He gave man laws according to God's standards. What was the result of it? That the sins, the transgressions, increased. So much so that they crucified the Saviour. You only need to read the history of Israel to see where the law leads. An imposed law has no positive result whatsoever. In contrast, God demonstrates in our days, so that it is settled for eternity, that the power of sin is indeed great, but if He gives man His Word in the heart, even in that old body, then that New Life proves to have the victory. The man who formerly, as a sinner living under the law, did not want to serve God, now proves to be able to serve God.

Galatians 5:5
For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.

Not by the law or the works, but through the Spirit, out of faith, we wait for ‘the hope of righteousness’. Our future expectation is namely based on the working of the Spirit. That coming righteousness is not the righteousness in connection with our regeneration, but with the justification of our life as such. Our appointment as sons (heirs) in the future.

Galatians 5:6
For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.
‘In Christ Jesus’ is quite different from ‘in Moses’. It makes no difference whether one is circumcised or not, for these are distinctions from the old creation. In Christ Jesus, it concerns a New Creation. That is not stated here, but in Galatians 6:15
For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.
Not in the ‘circumcision’ or in the ‘uncircumcision’, but in Christ Jesus, faith has power. Then faith does something. Faith works, namely: ‘through love’. It therefore says: ‘the faith working’, whereby it concerns works of faith. If someone works, he brings forth works. If faith works, it brings forth works of faith. These are of course not works of the law. James also speaks at length about ‘works of faith’.
» James 1:22
But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
‘Live the Word’ would also have been possible, whereby faith in the Word is the basis for our practical walk of life, and thus for our works. Faith works through love. That is very difficult if you do not know what love is. To put it briefly: ‘love’ stands for ‘fellowship’. We who believe are connected with, and thus have fellowship with, the living God. Where one passage of Scripture states that God has poured out His Spirit in our hearts, whereby we are connected with Him, another place states that He has poured out His love in our hearts. That amounts to the same thing. That living fellowship brings forth fruit, a ‘work’, namely, ‘the fruit of the Spirit’, the life of God in us, but that is in verse 22 of Galatians 5. The greatest power in creation is love, for God is love. Where we are connected with that living God, that power of God will also come to expression in our lives. That is what is said here.

Galatians 5:7
Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?
Better put is: ‘who has hindered you from obeying the truth’. There must have been someone who held them back from that truth, from that freedom. All believers start well with faith, but why do they not live it out? Because someone interferes who should not. Because believers are told things that are utterly unbiblical. They may be human, but they oppose the Gospel. That is how it always happens.

Galatians 5:8, 9
This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.
‘Their persuasion’ or mindset is their way of thinking’. ‘A little leaven’ brings us to:
» Matthew 13:33
Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
‘Three measures of fine meal’ are destined for the Lord. That cannot be missed, because the only other place in the Bible where three measures of meal are mentioned is with Abraham. (Genesis 18:6) He prepared a meal for the Lord. The meal is the expression of a practical life dedicated to God. ‘Three measures of meal’ are destined for the Lord and if leaven is hidden therein, that is not good. What is leaven? That is easy, because whatever it is, it is the leaven of the Pharisees (orthodoxy), of the Sadducees (liberals) (Matthew 16:6) and of the Herodians (religious politicians). (Mark 8:15) Leaven is always false doctrine, that cannot be missed. Leaven is corrupted dough, it is the working of death. That woman is the Jewish people and the leaven comes from that woman, from the law, from the Old Covenant.
» 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
That sour business does not belong there, because sour is corruption.

Galatians 5:10-12
I have confidence in you through the Lord, that ye will be none otherwise minded: but he that troubleth you shall bear his judgment, whosoever he be. And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased. I would they were even cut off which trouble you.
‘He that troubleth you’ means ‘he that stirs you up’. He, or they, shall ‘bear his judgment, whosoever he be’. Those who trouble these Galatians would be cut off. By God Himself, obviously, for He has every right to do so. The idea is if a believer walk opposes the Lord’s work, there is a chance that the Lord cuts them off. In the parable of the True Vine it is at least suggested that he who bears no fruit is cut off. That does not mean that such a one is lost, but that such a one can bear no more fruit.
There is therefore indeed some threat from these words addressed to the one who tries to place the believers under the law. He who brings you under the law, who introduces that leaven, shall bear the judgment, whosoever he be. And if it happens through a believer, then such a one is and remains saved. But ask yourself what will happen to a born-again person, supposed to serve God, who may have good intentions, to yoke

other believers with the law? What do you think will become of such person? Would he still receive some reward? For putting leaven in the fine meal seems to me a serious matter.
In verse 11 Paul comes to himself. Everyone knew that Paul was persecuted, especially by the legalistic Jews. If Paul were of the opinion that every Christian must be circumcised, then the Jews would have had no reason to persecute him. The same applies to us as believers. If we neatly keep to the prevailing rules, then we are not persecuted, but even gain an entry with people, and they do not reject us. And yet that 'freedom' is not what it is about. On the contrary, we should stand 'in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free'. That is what this Scripture passage is about and that explains why the Apostle does not give an inch to these Galatians. It would be particularly inconsistent if he now, because those Galatians follow a somewhat different decree, suddenly watered down the wine and gave in.
In general, the religious person is offended by, or stumbles over, the cross, because the accompanying message is that through death an end is made to the dominion of the law. Whichever law it may be, it spells the end of the flesh. It means that on the basis of 'one died for all, then were all dead'. (2 Corinthians 5:14) When we believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, then we are considered not to live under the law any more.

Galatians 5:13
For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.
What we should or should not do with that liberty is stated there. In any case, not use it 'for an occasion to the flesh'. As an excuse to live out of the flesh, according to the old man. That may well be possible, but that is not the purpose of that liberty. The purpose of that liberty is that we 'should serve the living God'. (Hebrews 9:14) We should walk 'as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God'. (1 Peter 2:16) Serving God can only be done in liberty. In that liberty we are 'servants one of another'. Serving our brothers and sisters is 'by love serving one another', for the Church is the Body of Christ. These are fellow believers, the 'household of faith'. (Galatians 6:10) Especially to them we should 'do good', that is the idea. Not so much for one another's sake, but for the sake of God Himself. To that end we are called and on the basis of this service we shall receive reward (inheritance) in the future and thus share in the glory of Christ. Therefore 'by love serve one another'. Under the law it is impossible to contribute anything good to benefit the Church.

Galatians 5:14
For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
Fulfilling the Law Through Grace
This verse is one of the key arguments the Apostle Paul uses to show that his preaching does not conflict with the law. In fact, the message that we are no longer under the law precisely fulfils the law. This idea comes

straight from Romans 3. The law's true purpose was to create fellowship and unity among God's people. But it couldn't achieve that because of ‘the weakness of the flesh.’ Instead, true unity emerges after the law has been set aside.

Who Is Our ‘Neighbour’?

This principle draws from Leviticus 19, where the word ‘neighbour’ (or ‘neighbours’) refers to fellow members of the same community, God's people. In the New Testament, our closest ‘neighbours’ are those who, like us, are born of God. They are part of the Body of Christ, and we are members together. These are our true neighbours.

In the singular form, ’neighbour’, there's only one clear biblical explanation: It points to the Lord Himself. This unlocks the deeper meaning behind the question in Mark 12:28-31: ‘Which is the first commandment of all?’ Jesus' answer ties it all together: ‘Thou shalt love the Lord thy God…’ And then: ‘The second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.’

These two aren't separate; they form one commandment. To love the Lord your God is to love your Neighbour, because our ultimate Neighbour is the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Good Samaritan: A Personal Rescue

Jesus embodies this as the Samaritan in the parable (Luke 10:25-37). He found me broken on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, the completely wrong path. He showed compassion, lifted me up, and took me to an inn. He paid my debts then, and He will settle the rest when He returns. That's the heart of it, in brief.

In a broader sense, our Neighbour isn't just Christ alone, it's Christ and His Body, the Church. This is who we are called to serve. In our time, the only work God is doing is building up the Church. When we serve Him, we join in that sacred task.

Freedom from the Law: The Path to Love

Where the law reigns, people condemn and criticize one another. Love is impossible there, it's just not feasible. But here's the beauty: When we're no longer under the law, we're set free.

From that liberty, loving one another becomes possible.

The law, in its entirety, is fulfilled only after the law itself has faded away. We must learn this truth about serving others, which is why it's quoted so often, by the apostles and by Jesus Himself. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ can only happen after the law is removed. Suddenly, it becomes doable.

Under the law? It's utterly impossible. People end up ‘biting and devouring one another’ (Galatians 5:15). But in grace, love flows freely.

Galatians 5:15

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

If you ‘bite and eat’ something, it is then digested, that is the idea. But that is obviously not the intention and therefore the Apostle says, as a summary of what he has discussed in the foregoing:

Galatians 5:16
This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.
This verse serves as a profound summary of the entire epistle. For those who struggle to grasp it, consider this rephrasing: ‘Walk in the Spirit, and as a result thereof, ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.’ That is precisely what it declares. ‘Walk in the Spirit’ is presented as a statement of fact. When we do so, we shall not ‘fulfil the lusts of the flesh.’
This does not mean we become sinless, or that the ‘lusts of the flesh’ have no influence in our lives whatsoever. Rather, the point is this: When we walk in the Spirit, the flesh loses its full liberty to impose its will. Walking in the Spirit comes at the expense of the fleshly lusts. Those who live under the law often insist they need it to sin less, that argument is persistently raised. Yet Scripture counters: The only way to suppress, or not fulfil, the lusts of the flesh is to walk in the Spirit.
» Romans 8:1-9
There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.
The purpose of ‘walking in the Spirit’ is not merely the suppression of our sins or the ‘flesh.’ No, the deeper aim is that we shall inherit the Kingdom as ‘sons (heirs) of God.’ We have already entered this Kingdom, for we share in the realm of Christ. As the Lord declared, one must be born again to enter the Kingdom (John 3:3-7, KJV). We are born again, and thus we have entered. But inheriting it fully, that is the promise secured through verse 16.
Learning to Live Under Grace
The Apostle testifies that, in the practice of his own life, he was delivered from the law only by learning to live under the New Covenant. Where he embraced grace, he found freedom from the Old Covenant of the law. We, too, must learn this truth, and we thank Him for it: for the forgiveness of sins, from which we draw strength to live each day. I always suggest beginning with this early in the morning. Then you can launch into the day from that firm foundation, for it is what sustains us. This stands in stark contrast to the habit of confessing sins in the evening and pleading for forgiveness anew. Why ask for forgiveness? We have received it! We live out of it. We thank Him for it. We thank Him for the liberty we possess,

and from which we live every day, precisely because of ‘walking in the Spirit.’

Galatians 5:17
For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
Here it is said why we should walk in the Spirit. ‘For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh’. That is also in Romans 8. There it also says that ‘the flesh is not subject to the law of God’. That ‘the flesh wars against the Spirit’ and vice versa. And that ‘the carnal mind is enmity against God’. So walk in the Spirit. Live out of these things, for flesh and Spirit are opposed to each other.

Galatians 5:18
But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.
» Romans 8:14 says: ‘For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.’ They shall therefore inherit the Kingdom. And in Galatians 5:18 it says: ‘Ye are not under the law’. In practice we are free and where we serve God, we shall be appointed as sons and thus inherit the Kingdom. On the other hand, ‘the works of the flesh’ are manifest, as appears from the following verses, where the Apostle names a number of those works.

Galatians 5:19-21
Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
In my Bible, there are cross-references beneath this passage to Ephesians 5:5 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. These echo the same solemn warning: that those who practise such things forfeit their inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ.
» Ephesians 5:5
For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
» 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
Turning from the Flesh as God's Children
By nature, we all belong to those who commit these acts. Yet the divine intention is clear: Now that we have become children of God, we must pay no heed to the flesh. We should not rouse it through the law, for that only

awakens it. As Scripture declares: ‘The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law’ (1 Corinthians 15:56, KJV). You must ensure it remains dormant. Ignore it. Do not impose a law upon it, lest the beast within man stirs to life.

A Warning for Believers

Sadly, there are many believers who persist in these very deeds, often invigorated by the law itself, which stirs the flesh into greater activity. Yet such indulgence leads nowhere; it bars the door to inheritance. The matters listed here are all outward and evident. These are visible works, plainly displayed. ‘Now the works of the flesh are manifest.’ In stark contrast stands ‘the fruit of the Spirit.’ Observe the twofold opposition: the works of the flesh, set against the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance.

The Fruit of the Spirit

What the Spirit produces in us are these very qualities. The ‘fruit of the Spirit’ has nothing to do with outward works or visible deeds, but rather with a transformed mindset, as this verse clearly reveals. Of course, they can become visible in our lives. The divine intention is that these fruits reside not only within us but also shape our daily walk and activity. These attributes stand in direct contrast to the works of the natural man and the fleshly-minded believer. Where the Spirit bears fruit, where it yields a true result in us, that result manifests first in our mindset. It reshapes, to a profound degree, our very character.

Renewing the Mind Through God's Word

» Romans 12:2

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mi» that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

How else can one learn to think differently? By absorbing new information. By nourishing our thoughts, indeed, our hearts, with fresh sustenance. Not the fleeting words of men, but the eternal Word of God. This is why Scripture commands: ‘Be filled with the Spirit’ (Ephesians 5:18, KJV). Foremost among these fruits stands love. This is worlds apart from adultery, the very first vice listed in verses 19-21. Love assumes faithfulness; adultery assumes betrayal. Love fosters fellowship. But love for whom? I once posed this question to John, and he replied: ‘Love the brethren, for so we know Him.’ It is emphasised time and again. The point remains: The believer's life should be chiefly oriented towards bearing this fruit. For the intention is that His life, Christ's life, should take shape within us. That we should be moulded into ‘the image of the Son of God.’

Conformed to Christ's Image

Romans 8:28-29

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

God desires us to possess the same mindset, ’that mind’, as the Lord Jesus (Philippians 2:5, KJV). God is love, and the fruit of His life within us is love. Thus flows fellowship, for that is its essence. Thus comes joy, rooted in that same fellowship. The fruit of the Spirit is peace, fellowship once more. All this pertains to our attitude towards others. The fruit of the Spirit is longsuffering: a long-fused courage, especially in relation to others. Kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance, these are the hallmarks of Christ and the mindset of our Saviour. Such characteristics must be awakened in us. And they can awaken only through ‘walking in the Spirit.’ In this way, the Spirit becomes active within. We cultivate this by turning our gaze towards spiritual realities, which we discover in the Word of God, in the Bible itself.
Filled with the Spirit Through the Word
» Ephesians 5:18 declares: ‘...be filled with the Spirit.’ This mirrors Colossians 3:16: ‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.’ They are one and the same, yielding identical results, as both passages describe: ‘Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.’ Being filled with the Spirit occurs solely when we permit ourselves to be filled with the Word, and thereby with the very thoughts of God. It is about allowing that Word to be inscribed upon our hearts: believing it, and thus learning to comprehend how the Lord Himself thinks. How He responds to circumstances. What His work entails, and why it unfolds as it does. We can receive the mindset of Christ only by coming to understand that mindset of Christ. And it comes to us through the Word, for in it He has revealed Himself.
The Purpose of Preaching God's Word
The sole purpose of preaching the Word of God to those born again is precisely this transformation. A Christian who attends church regularly does so not merely to accumulate knowledge of self, for a mirror suffices at home, but to gain knowledge of who Christ is.
» James 1:21
Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.’..
‘Which is able to save your souls,’ for the spirit, through regeneration, is already saved, as verse 18 affirms. We were ‘born of the Spirit,’ but thereafter it is our duty to ‘with meekness receive the Word’, that is, Christ Himself, the Holy Spirit, implanted within us.

Galatians 5:23
Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.
Where that Spirit works in us, we are in practice in no way under the law. There ‘the law is not against us’, for the idea is that the law is laid upon the flesh and not upon the ‘righteous’.
» 1 Timothy 1:9-10
Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with

mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;
Fulfilling the Law Through the Spirit's Fruit
Where the fulfilment of the law consists in our loving one another, there that law is indeed fulfilled by the Spirit. He produces His fruit in our hearts: love, joy, peace, longsuffering. And thereby, or therein, we ought also to walk.
The Purpose of Preaching to Believers: True Fellowship
Once again: What is the purpose of preaching the Word of God to those who are already believers? John addresses this in his first Epistle:
» 1 John 1:3
That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.
As a consequence, we believers also enjoy fellowship with one another, that is the divine order. The Word is proclaimed to believers so that they may grasp their place in God's work in these days: that they have become members of the Body of Christ. Thus, the purpose of proclaiming the Word of God is fellowship, an unbreakable fellowship. A unity forged on the foundation of the Word itself. The preaching of the law, by contrast, never fosters such fellowship. It is ‘the ministration of death’ (2 Corinthians 3:7, KJV), and death means separation. Fellowship signifies ‘becoming one,’ yet under the law, division is inevitable. That discord arises from the law itself. When Paul preached the Gospel to the Jews and they rejected it, they fell into sharp disagreement among themselves:
» Acts 28:25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed...Maintaining Unity in the Spirit
Instead, Scripture urges:
» Ephesians 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.
In this fellowship, we are cleansed, and where cleansing occurs, it deepens the fellowship still further.
‘Keeping the Word of God,’ or ‘keeping His commandments’, that is, His teaching, means precisely this: loving the brethren (as in 1 John 5:2, KJV). According to John, this is the sole mark by which a genuine believer can be recognised.

Galatians 5:24
And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.
We who are Christ's have crucified the flesh, and thereby everything belonging to it. We have forsaken our old man, considering ourselves dead with Christ and reckoning that old man truly dead (Romans 6, KJV). This is no simple task. The reason? We encounter our own old man every day, as well as that of others. Yet in practice, it is straightforward: That which is dead is gone. We maintain no further communication with it. This must be the attitude we believers adopt towards our own flesh. The sole hindrance to practising this comes when we live under the law, and there lies the only true problem. For ‘holding it for dead’ means to ‘completely ignore’ it.

It is easy enough to say, but these truths must be learned through the rigours of daily life. And that is no easy matter, for it requires us to accept not only ourselves but one another, just as we are. In essence, it means we cease striving to improve ourselves. You may attempt it, but the Bible assures you it will not succeed, and I wholeheartedly concur, for it mirrors my own personal experience. Instead, we must accept ourselves precisely as we are and ignore the rest entirely. Those lusts are what keep the old man stirring. The natural man's life is governed by his lingering desires, by the goals he yearns to attain, which seem so fundamental to him. These very things we must relinquish. It is a hard message, but it cannot be otherwise. We are exhorted to ‘be content with such things as ye have’ (Hebrews 13:5, KJV). Be content with what we possess today and draw our life from it. To the natural man, this is nothing short of a death blow. Yet it is precisely the biblical principle: ‘having crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.’

Galatians 5:25
If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.
If we have received life in the Spirit, if we are born again, then let us also walk in the Spirit in the daily practice of our lives. For receiving this life is one matter; what use is life if we do nothing with it? We are born again and granted New Life precisely so that this Life may be lived out in practice. This transforms our walk of life. Not because our flesh has been improved, but because something entirely new has been placed within us. Other things now dwell in our hearts. Other motivations drive us. Other forces shape the power in our lives, and thus, our walk appears altogether different.
We have not received the Spirit merely to live neatly under the law. Therefore: ‘Let us also walk in the Spirit.’ Where we do so, as verse 16 declares, ’we shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.’

Galatians 5:26
Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.
Here it says this: ‘If we walk in the Spirit, we are not seekers of vain glory’. Then we shall not provoke one another and also not be jealous of one another, ‘envying one another’. Where we live by the flesh, we are ‘seekers of vain glory’. Then we provoke one another. We get in each other’s way, that is the idea. Then we are jealous of one another. The natural life of man is to a high degree determined by that. If people seek honour in this life, one is jealous of those who have achieved what they themselves wanted to achieve. It can even go so far that one stands against each other’s life.
Here it also says that honour is vain (empty). Glory passes away anyway. It means nothing. Has no value at all. But why do people seek it then, if it is empty anyway?
But if we are NOT ‘seekers of vain glory’, what do we do then? That is not said concretely, but examples are given in the Bible. As also in chapter 6:1.

Galatians 6:1-2
Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
If we live in the Spirit, under grace, not under the law, and we witness someone committing ‘some fault,’ what then should we do? The principle here is that we ought to respond with compassion, as the verse instructs. For that brother or sister apparently could not prevent it, whereas we have managed to do so thus far. The verse even warns that, if we fail to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, we ourselves might be tempted as a result. That is how I interpret it: ‘Lest thou also be tempted.’ The risk is high that we first reproach another, only to fall into the very same error ourselves.
The key idea is that we must not reproach or condemn the offender. Instead, if we perceive that someone has strayed from the right path, we should endeavour, in a meek manner, to guide them back to order. For ‘restore such an one’ carries the sense of ‘setting in order’ or ‘repairing.’ Thus, if a believer goes astray and we are spiritual, our duty is to lead them back onto the right path. Not by declaring, ‘You have done wrong’, for they usually know that already. That misses the point entirely. One of the gravest errors we believers make is reverting to life under the law, rather than under grace. When you observe such a lapse, remind that brother or sister that it concerns not the law, but grace. That is true restoration. Those ‘which are spiritual’ embody grace and extend help where needed. Offering aid remains an act of service, of humility, and that is the essence of this passage.
Spiritual believers are strong, positioned to ‘bear the infirmities of the weak’ (Romans 15:1, KJV). We have no mandate to lord it over others, that is the law's domain. Rather, we bear a responsibility to serve as examples when required. And, as verse 2 urges: ‘Bear ye one another's burdens...for so fulfil the law of Christ.’ The Lord Himself has borne our burdens; only for that reason do we, in turn, bear one another's when necessary. If we see a brother or sister err, or grow concerned for them, the onus falls on us to act, yet always ‘in the spirit of meekness.’

Galatians 6:3
For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself in his own conceit.
We are no better than the one we catch in some fault. The same failings can befall us too. If we ourselves stumble once, we shall need help from others. This truth is emphasised here. In truth, we are still nothing. All that we have become stems from the riches of God's grace. That is not our merit, it is His. Therefore, pride ill becomes us, and we cannot exalt ourselves above one another. For we are all sinners, yet saved by grace. If

conceit arises, because we fancy ourselves such fine spiritual believers, then we have much to bear: namely, ‘one another's burdens.’
We who live out of grace bear the weaknesses of sinners. The perfect example was set by the Lord Jesus. In so doing, He earned a poor reputation among those who lived under the law. He showed compassion to sinners, to harlots and publicans. He drew near to them, ate with them: those who so desperately needed grace.

Galatians 6:4-5
But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.
Under the law, it is customary to scrutinise the works of others, preferably against the law itself, so as to condemn them and exalt oneself. But no: ‘Let every man prove his own work,’ his own life. The principle is that, when we examine our own deeds, we find nothing to boast of. If things in our life goes well, it is seldom our merit, but the Lord's, because we live out of grace. This is the reality from which we ought to live each day. We must not boast at the expense of others. Our standing depends not on how others fare better or worse than we. Let us release that comparison, for we are children of God, drawing life from the boundless riches of His grace. All that we are, all that we possess, we owe to Him in thanks.
We ought to extend grace to one another. Wherever that term appears in the Bible, it is often rendered as ‘forgiving one another.’ This is not mere ‘calling to account,’ followed by a confession and a grudging ‘let bygones be bygones.’ Biblical ‘forgiving’ means ‘leaving alone.’ If you study forgiveness in your Bible, you will find it translates two distinct words. One signifies ‘giving grace,’ rendered as ‘forgiving’; the other, ‘leaving alone.’ Yet they are not so different: Both mean ‘ignoring.’ Just as we must ignore ourselves, reckoning not with our old man, so we must ignore the old man in others. Simply let it be. The unity and fellowship we share rests not on our making no mistakes, but on this: We all make mistakes, and we all live from the same overflowing riches of God's grace. Paul captures it thus in his Epistle to the Ephesians, alluding to how we have been, and are, forgiven:
» Ephesians 4:32
And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.
‘Every man shall bear his own burden’, and, if need be, that of another, but never the reverse. The entire point, of course, is that such a burden is scarcely heavy. For what is there truly to bear? Nothing more than learning not to take offence at another (Romans 14:13, KJV). There is no one who can give offence if none takes it. We must school ourselves to become insensitive when someone lashes out against us, whether deliberately or not. That distinction matters little, and since we do not live under the law, we do not need to investigate it. Where offence arises, it springs from the old man, and we must ignore it. If we are strong in the Spirit, we grow unaffected to what others do or say against us. Then we simply overlook it.

» Romans 14:12
So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.
It aids this mindset to stand before the mirror and behold who we truly are. How often has the Lord borne, and endured, our weaknesses? Daily He carries them.
» Ephesians 5:2
And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.
Bearing, or enduring, one another's weaknesses contributes to the building up (‘edifying’) of our brothers and sisters (Romans 14:19, KJV). It advances the building of the Church itself. This we must do, insofar as it lies within our power, that is the very idea.

Galatians 6:6
Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.
To speak of this verse, I find exceedingly difficult. Nevertheless, it is a wholly biblical truth. We believers must first ‘bear our own burden,’ and thereafter there are two further categories whose burdens we ought to share: that of ‘the one overtaken in a fault’ (from verse 1), and that of ‘the one who teacheth in the word’ (here in verse 6). I know not why the Apostle introduces this here, but it fits seamlessly into the argument. A peculiar phenomenon arises: Once you are deemed a teacher, it is wisest to place the people under the law. Then you shall generally secure a reasonably decent income. By dictating what they must do and must not do, what they may and may not do, you at least command a large audience. And that proves particularly useful for the collection. But the Apostle Paul's plight was that they would hear nothing more from him. Churches barred the door to him, for he preached nothing but grace, and all that pertains thereto. I hold that this special mention, this solitary verse in between, is thus not truly ‘in between.’ For where the Word of God is genuinely taught, the teacher is often in want. I say this not for my own sake, but solely because it stands written here.
For those sensitive to the law, the Apostle declares:1 Timothy 5:18
For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.1 Corinthians 9:9
For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?
The quotation hails from Deuteronomy 25:4, where it concerned oxen. Yet here it speaks of servants, and that in connexion with elders and their labour in the Church. God cares not for the oxen, but He does for His servants, that is the principle. To contribute to such care, we have received grace.

Galatians 6:7
Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.
If we deviate from these principles, laid forth in the preceding verse and throughout this Epistle, then we are in truth mocking the Lord, and

thereby God Himself. Where we live from the flesh, the death and resurrection of Christ finds no application whatsoever; it is denied in practice, and thus even mocked. Paul writes here: You may stray, ‘sow to the flesh,’ but you had best not do so, for ‘God is not mocked.’ That ‘reaping from the flesh’ carries dire consequences. Eternal life cannot be forfeited, but the promised glory can. In other words, that reward set before us. The intent is that, in our walk, the Lord should be magnified. There is a reward, a ‘full reward’, reserved for that. The Lord has reckoned upon it. Where we serve not the Lord, but live under the principles of the Old Covenant, we shall receive no such reward in the age to come.
» 2 Timothy 2:12
If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:
If we deny Him in the practice of our lives, He will deny us now and here, in the practice of our lives. If we serve Him not, why then should He care for us?

Galatians 6:8
For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
He ‘who walks after the flesh’, and thus walks under the law, for we follow the thread of this Epistle, ’soweth to his flesh.’ He shall then also ‘reap corruption from his flesh.’ It shall fare with him as with the natural man in general: Nothing comes of life. But he who walks in the Spirit ‘shall reap life everlasting from the Spirit.’ If we do not read with sufficient care, we may draw the wrong conclusion: that ‘walking in the Spirit’ means ‘reaping eternal life.’ As if our receiving eternal life, or not, depended upon our present walk. But that is not the meaning. It concerns rather the eternal life being lived out and bearing fruit, even while we remain in the flesh. We received eternal life at the moment of faith, but it is quite another matter that this eternal life should also be active in our daily walk. And that we should pluck its fruits, from the riches of His grace. It is precisely the same truth as in Romans 6.
» Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
This is addressed to those born again in Christ, and thus the expression here does not imply that we receive eternal life out of grace anew. The purport of this verse is that we now live daily under ‘the reign of grace’ (verse 14). The ‘gift of God’ pertains to the outworking of that eternal life. In other words: The gift of God is actually living the eternal life. That life is not subject to corruption, which ends in death, but is a life that constantly contributes to a glorious future. Every day of our life can bear fruit for eternity. Thus, there is a steady building towards that future. That is what people naturally desire, is it not? It can therefore happen, but then only out of grace.

Galatians 6:9
And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if

we faint not.
As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
This ‘well doing’ is identical to ‘walking in the Spirit’ in verses 16 and 25 of the preceding chapter. For the peril lies in our tendency to revert immediately to thoughts of the law: The law declares that certain deeds must be performed, deeming them good; that certain things must be forsaken, branding them evil. Yet that cannot be so. Within the context of this Epistle, it is evident that ‘doing good’, in which we must not grow weary, is none other than ‘walking in the Spirit’ or ‘walking in liberty.’ These good works are ever those inspired by the Spirit Himself: Works that concern the edification, the building up, of the Church. They always pertain to service under the New Covenant.
» Ephesians 2:10
For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.
At first, there were no good works; but now we walk in ‘good works, which God hath before ordained’, that is the principle. God manifests through us, via us, to others that He will display His grace. That I am a child of God serves as a demonstration of what His grace can achieve. Good works must lead to the glory, or glorification, of God our Father. Matthew 5:16 is the first New Testament reference to good works; the last appears in 1 Peter 2:12. What lies between alters nothing of this truth. These good works are deeds we would not naturally perform, but which are accomplished in us, or wrought, by the Spirit, by the very life of Christ within.
We ‘faint not’ in our service of grace, in our service under the New Covenant. Paul affirms this also in:
» 2 Corinthians 4:1, 16
Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; ... For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.
When Paul speaks of our service under the New Covenant, our ‘ministry of the Spirit,’ or our ‘walk in the Spirit’, he insists that we faint not in this service, or, as verse 9 declares, in ‘our well doing.’ We shall reap only ‘if we faint not’, that is, ‘when we remain faithful.’ The foremost requirement of our service to the Lord under the New Covenant is to be ‘faithful’, and that is but another word for ‘faith.’
I always lament the lack of a capital letter in ‘due,’ for ‘we shall reap’ occurs in His season. The phrase ‘in due season’ has become so commonplace that we have lost its sense. But it signifies ‘in His season.’ In His season, it shall be revealed to what extent our lives have truly served Him. What time that is becomes clear from many other Scriptures: Namely, ‘the Day of Christ’ (Philippians 1:10; 2:16, KJV) or ‘the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 1:8, KJV). This refers not merely to what we term ‘the rapture of the Church,’ but far more to ‘our appearing before the judgment seat of Christ’ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10, KJV). For ‘day’ here denotes ‘judgment’, not over us, for that transpired at the cross of Golgotha, but judgment over our works (1 Corinthians 3, KJV).2

Corinthians 5:10
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.
Faithful Service: The Path to ‘Well Done’
Good works are those by which we serve one another through love. These are works that flow from our being believers and faithful to the Lord. When we stand before Him, and all is in order, the Lord shall declare: Matthew 25:21, 23
...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.
What makes the servant good? It stands beside it: ‘Thou good, namely faithful, servant.’ The goodness lies not chiefly in the results of his labour, but in his faithfulness to the One he served. That is what is expected of us. ‘If we faint not, we shall reap.’
» 2 Corinthians 4:17
For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;
And also these precious things: ‘gold, silver, precious stones’ (1 Corinthians 3:12, KJV). But we are not there yet. We therefore still have time to invest, as the following verse reveals.

Galatians 6:10
As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.
As long as it is not yet ‘His season,’ that is to our advantage, for it signifies that we still have opportunity to serve Him. To walk in these good works, which He has prepared. To be changed from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18, KJV), in order to be ‘conformed to the image of his Son’ (Romans 8:29, KJV). Therefore: ‘Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.’ For they belong to the same house, the same household, the same people of which we ourselves are part. Like us, they share in that same spiritual temple. They too are members of that same Body of Christ.
» Ephesians 4:3-6
Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
That is the heart of it: Maintaining that unity which God has wrought in the Church. With this, we draw nigh to the close of the Epistle. What typically remains is ‘the hearty greetings’, certainly after what now follows.

Galatians 6:11
Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.
Yet it does not end there. The intention is that due attention be given to this Epistle, which the Apostle apparently wrote with great difficulty. Later accounts suggest he dictated his Epistles, perhaps owing to an eye

ailment, or the frailties of age. In essence, the Apostle is saying: I have taken such pains to pen you this lengthy Epistle; will you now take the pains to study it?
Paul offers a commentary on the entire debate concerning the law, delivered in a somewhat cynical yet profoundly realistic vein. In the preceding chapters, the Apostle has composed a theological treatise on the subject. Yet evidently, ‘Biblical arguments’ carried little weight in such discussions. And so it proves with many other spiritual matters. People often care little for what the Bible truly says. The crux of the matter is this: Debates on the extent to which a believer ought to live under the law are seldom waged on biblical grounds. There lies the difficulty. The Apostle likely perceived as much, prompting him to compose an entire Epistle brimming with biblical arguments on the issue, complete with numerous examples. Yet ultimately, he seems to recognise that such reasoning falls on deaf ears for many, who hold scant respect for the Bible itself. They prefer to heed what the modern man might say. Thus, what Paul does, at the very close of this Epistle, is to address that debate anew, bereft of biblical arguments. Rather like a theologian, he proceeds along psychological and philosophical lines, probing the phenomenon itself.

Galatians 6:12
As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
Imposing the Law: A Bid to Avoid Persecution
As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
Those who seek to bring you under the law have but one motive, and it is no biblical one. There is only this single reason: that they ‘should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.’ Why impose the law upon believers? To ‘take away the offence of the cross’, a point Paul raised earlier in Galatians 5:11, where he spoke of his own experience. Here in chapter 6:12, he returns to it. He declares: The difficulty is this, if you begin preaching that the believer is free and may do all things, then problems arise, especially with the religious man and society at large. For it then appears, though this stems from a grave misjudgement, that you no longer submit to governments, norms, values, or rules. That is a profound misunderstanding, for the Apostle has already made clear that we do uphold such so-called norms and values. The true intent is that we walk in the Spirit and ‘do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith’ (verse 10). That is the guiding rule for our lives as believers. You might term it ‘the law of liberty,’ as James does in James 2:12 .
According to 2 Corinthians 5:15 , ‘one died for all,’ and thus ‘we all died.’ Where we are dead, we possess no rights, and no duties, in the world any longer. Yet this truth is rejected foremost by the government, which craves dominion over us. Our fellow man desires it too, for there is but one force that drives humanity: the lust for power. Hence the allure of democracy,

every citizen is wooed with the promise of wielding power through the ballot. It appeals to our innate craving, for nothing satanic is alien to man: Ever higher ambitions, rebellion, the humiliation of others. These were the devil's inventions, yet precisely what we must shun. If we proclaim that we are dead to the world, dead to the rights and duties of the old man, we at once invite enmity upon ourselves. This comes generally from humanity and particularly from religious humanity, for the religious man labours under far weightier laws than the irreligious.
The preaching of ‘the cross of Christ,’ as Paul notes in 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 , is foolishness to ‘them which perish.’ It is a message that the old man, the old creation, holds no value whatsoever for God. Man is abandoned to his fate, for the plain reason that humanity has forsaken God. This is expounded at length in Romans 1. Where we proclaim this ‘message of the cross,’ we strike at the very core of humanity in general, and of the religious man in particular.
That ‘bringing under the law’ occurs ‘lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.’ One seeks to evade such persecutions, , on account of the faith, by aligning with human principles. But ‘the rudiments of the world,’ according to the Bible, are those of the law. Why then strive to bring us under the law? Well, then we live neatly once more, just like all other folk in the world, and tolerance follows. Then one says: This one holds this faith, that one another. In other circles: This one follows this religion, that one another. Elsewhere: This one dwells under this culture, that one under another. Yet it is thrice the same deception. If we as believers, as Christians, also live under a law, then we blend seamlessly among all those others. Then nothing seems amiss. Then we can ‘make a fair shew in the flesh.’

Galatians 6:13
For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.
Where there is opportunity to bring people, those who have been set free, back under the law, one gains ‘boasting in men.’ One can acquire honour from it, if one succeeds in fitting people into a rigid pattern. It becomes an expression of power when that occurs. Where others witness how one subjugates us under their law, they position themselves as our superiors. Thus, one can ‘make a fair shew’ to men. But why should we pursue that? It is a ‘fair shew in the flesh,’ yet we ought to make a fair shew in the Spirit, and to the Lord. We achieve this by pursuing His affairs, by ‘walking in the Spirit.’ Paul declares here that those who impose the law upon others do not keep it themselves. Nor can they.
» Romans 8:7
Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.
One may attempt to bring others under a law, but one cannot live under it oneself. Peter put it plainly: Acts 15:10
Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?
If it proves impossible in practice, why then teach it?

Galatians 6:14
But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.
Other believers ought likewise not to glory in the flesh, but rather to glory in the Spirit. If there is anything worthy of glory, then it must be that ‘fruit of the Spirit,’ wrought in our hearts. In the very work of the Spirit, which unfolds despite our flawed lives and our sinful bodies. Then, and only then, is it true glorying: Glorying in the Lord, or in grace, or, as the Apostle declares here, ’glorying in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ For, as Paul explains, it is that cross whereby the world is crucified to me, or for me, and whereby I am crucified to the world. The principle is this: The world stands dead to believers; it holds no meaning, and there exists no further communication with it. We who have embraced ‘the cross of Christ’, an expression that may be transferred to all believers, are thereby reckoned to understand that God holds no communion with the old man or our old nature. Moreover, we are reckoned to know that the resurrection of Christ forms the foundation of our salvation, for thereby we live in God's sight. And thus Paul insists: ‘God forbid that I should glory in anything else than the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Nothing else accompanies it. Not this: We glory in the cross and the law, for if you glory in the law, you deny the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ in practice, and ‘Christ is become of no effect unto you’ (Galatians 5:2, KJV). Our sole message is that of the New Covenant, of the Gospel, and thus of the Spirit's working. Therefore it also says in the verse...

Galatians 6:15
For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.
We have a part in Him and are in Christ ‘blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ’ (Ephesians 1:3, KJV). In Christ Jesus, circumcision holds no power, nor does uncircumcision any more than that. What holds meaning for us and for God is a New Creature, a New Creation. Insofar as we live in fellowship with our heavenly Father, it is because we are New Creatures through the resurrection of Christ. Only then does His Spirit dwell within us.

Galatians 6:16
And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.
Some reason crookedly and declare: Then the Jewish people evidently have no future any more. To that I must say: That is very silly, I truly mean it. That is reasoning outside the Bible. In the future, it shall become plain that all Israel shall come to faith, at least all that remains of it, and that shall then clearly be ‘the Israel of God.’ For they shall learn to live according to these same principles from which we already now live: Out of grace and through faith. Not on the basis of the law, but on the basis of this rule of the New Covenant. These are the only principles for the

practical life of the believer. After which the Apostle ends the discussion, and I always find it most pleasing how he does so.

Galatians 6:17
From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.
'I do not want to hear that nagging any further,' he says. 'Let no man trouble me' simply means: I will have no more to do with it, not with this discussion either.'
I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus', a truth Paul also shares in Colossians 1:24 saying: I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church.:
The same suffering that befell the Lord Jesus Christ, because He preached not the law but grace, because He condemned not sins but forgave, befalls the Apostle Paul, for precisely the same reason. And therefore the Apostle declares: That talk of the law must now cease; I suffer enough already. Where he endured as the Lord Jesus endured and was persecuted as the Lord was persecuted, he followed the example of the Lord Jesus Himself. Therefore, what is there left to discuss? End of the story. Perhaps that is why he closes the Epistle so abruptly here, more sharply than in many others.

Galatians 6:18
Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.
The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ
More than 'the grace,' he mentions nothing, for more than 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' you need naught. He declares not merely 'the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you,' but adds: 'with your spirit.' So not with your flesh. Not law, works, body, not outward things, but grace be with your spirit. For the intent is that we should walk in the Spirit and that out of the riches of God's grace. There is nothing more to say on that. The Apostle Paul pens many more Epistles, but that alters nothing. It always concerns these same principles. The purpose of our salvation is that we should learn to live out of principles other than those of the world. That we should learn not to trust in our own human philosophy, or that of people trained in it, I mean that most seriously, but that we should learn to trust in the promises of God, which we have here on 1,200 pages in our Bible. Then we might come to understand that there are other principles, other rules, from which a person can live. God has equipped us for that.
» 2 Corinthians 3:6
Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Summary of the Bible Study on Galatians 5–6:
Living by Grace in the Spirit

This teaching unpacks Galatians 5–6 as a profound call to freedom from legalism, emphasizing life under grace through the Spirit. The Apostle

Paul's message counters the Judaizers' push for law-keeping (e.g., circumcision) by showing how true fulfillment of the law comes not through rules but through love, Spirit-led living, and mutual service in the church. Below, I'll highlight key sections, themes, and cross-references, structured by chapter and verse for clarity.

Galatians 5:14–15: Love Fulfills the Law

- Core Idea: The entire law is summed up in loving your neighbor as yourself (quoting Leviticus 19:18). This love, directed first toward God (as the ultimate ‘Neighbor’ in Christ, echoing the Good Samaritan parable), builds unity in the Body of Christ. Under the law, division reigns (‘bite and devour’); under grace, freedom enables genuine love.
- Key Insight: Preaching freedom from the law is the law's fulfillment (cf. Romans 3). The law's purpose was fellowship, but fleshly weakness failed it, grace succeeds where law removes barriers.
- Contrast: Law = condemnation and criticism; Grace = liberty for love.

Galatians 5:16–18: Walk in the Spirit

- Core Idea: ‘Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh’ (v. 16) is the epistle's summary. Spirit-walking doesn't eliminate sin but restrains fleshly desires, unlike law-keeping, which stirs them (cf. Romans 8:1–9).
- Key Insight: Flesh and Spirit war (v. 17; Romans 8:7–8), so being ‘led by the Spirit’ means freedom from law (v. 18; Romans 8:14) and sonship, heirs of the Kingdom. Purpose: Not sin-suppression, but inheriting as ‘sons of God’ (John 3).
- Practical: Live daily from forgiveness (morning thanks, not evening confession), under the New Covenant.

Galatians 5:19–23: Works of Flesh vs. Fruit of the Spirit

- Core Idea: Fleshly works (adultery, idolatry, hatred, etc., vv. 19–21) are visible sins barring Kingdom inheritance (cf. Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9–10). They thrive under law (‘the strength of sin is the law,’ 1 Corinthians 15:56).
- Contrast with Fruit (v. 22–23): Love, joy, peace, etc., are inner mindset shifts (not ‘works’), transforming character (Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:5). No law opposes these, they fulfill it naturally (1 Timothy 1:9).
- Key Insight: Ignore flesh to keep it ‘asleep’; feed on God's Word to bear fruit (Ephesians 5:18; Colossians 3:16). Aim: Conformed to Christ's image (Romans 8:28–29).

Aspect	Works of the Flesh (Gal. 5:19–21)	Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22–23)
Nature	Visible, outward actions; stimulated by law	Inner character/attitude; grown by Spirit
Examples	Adultery, hatred, envy, drunkenness	Love (vs. adultery), peace (vs. strife), meekness
Outcome	No Kingdom inheritance; death/separation	Fulfills law; life, fellowship, inheritance
Source	Flesh (carnal mind, enmity to God)	Spirit (renewed mind, Christ's mindset)

Galatians 5:24–26: Crucify the Flesh, Walk in Humility

- Core Idea: Believers have ‘crucified the flesh’ (v. 24; Romans 6), treat it as dead, ignoring its lusts. Live (v. 25) what you've received: Spirit-life changes walk without improving flesh.
- Warning (v. 26): Flesh seeks vain glory (provoking/envying); Spirit rejects it.

Galatians 6:1–5: Restore and Bear Burdens in Grace

- Core Idea: Spiritual ones restore the faulty meekly (v. 1), bearing burdens (v. 2) to fulfill ‘the law of Christ’ (His example of grace). Examine self first (vv. 3–5), no boasting; prove your own work.
- Key Insight: Grace means ignoring faults (self and others) like God does (Ephesians 4:32). Unity rests on shared grace, not perfection (Romans 14:13). Bear weaknesses to edify the church (Romans 15:1; Ephesians 5:2).

Galatians 6:6–10: Support, Sow, and Do Good

- Core Idea: Share with teachers (v. 6; 1 Timothy 5:18). Don't mock God, sow to Spirit for eternal fruit (vv. 7–8; Romans 6:23), not flesh for corruption.
- Encouragement (vv. 9–10): Persist in ‘well doing’ (Spirit-led service; Ephesians 2:10) to all, especially believers, reap in ‘His season’ (judgment seat, 2 Corinthians 5:10; Matthew 25:21).
- Key Insight: Good works glorify God (Matthew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12), prepared beforehand. Faithfulness = reward (2 Timothy 2:12; 2 Corinthians 4:17).

Galatians 6:11–18: Final Stand Against Legalism

- Core Idea: Paul's handwritten plea (v. 11) exposes motives: Legalists seek fleshly show and avoid cross-persecution (vv. 12–13; 1 Corinthians 1:17–18). True glory: Only in the cross (v. 14), creating new creatures (v. 15; Ephesians 1:3).
- Blessing (vv. 16–18): Peace/mercy on those walking this ‘rule’ (New Creation), including future ‘Israel of God.’ Paul bears Christ's marks (v. 17; Colossians 1:24), end the trouble!
- Closing: Grace with your spirit (v. 18), not flesh/law (2 Corinthians 3:6).

Overarching Themes and Application

- Grace vs. Law: Law kills (separation, flesh-stirring); Spirit gives life (unity, fruit-bearing). Preaching aims at fellowship (1 John 1:3; Ephesians 4:3–6), not knowledge of self but of Christ (James 1:21).
- Church as Body: Love/neighbours = serving Christ's Body; ignore old man for unbreakable unity.
- Daily Walk: Born again? Live it, thank for grace daily, sow Spirit-seeds, bear burdens meekly. Reward awaits faithful service (not sinlessness).
- Warning: Legalism mocks the cross, fits worldly ‘rudiments’ (Colossians 2:8), denies freedom.